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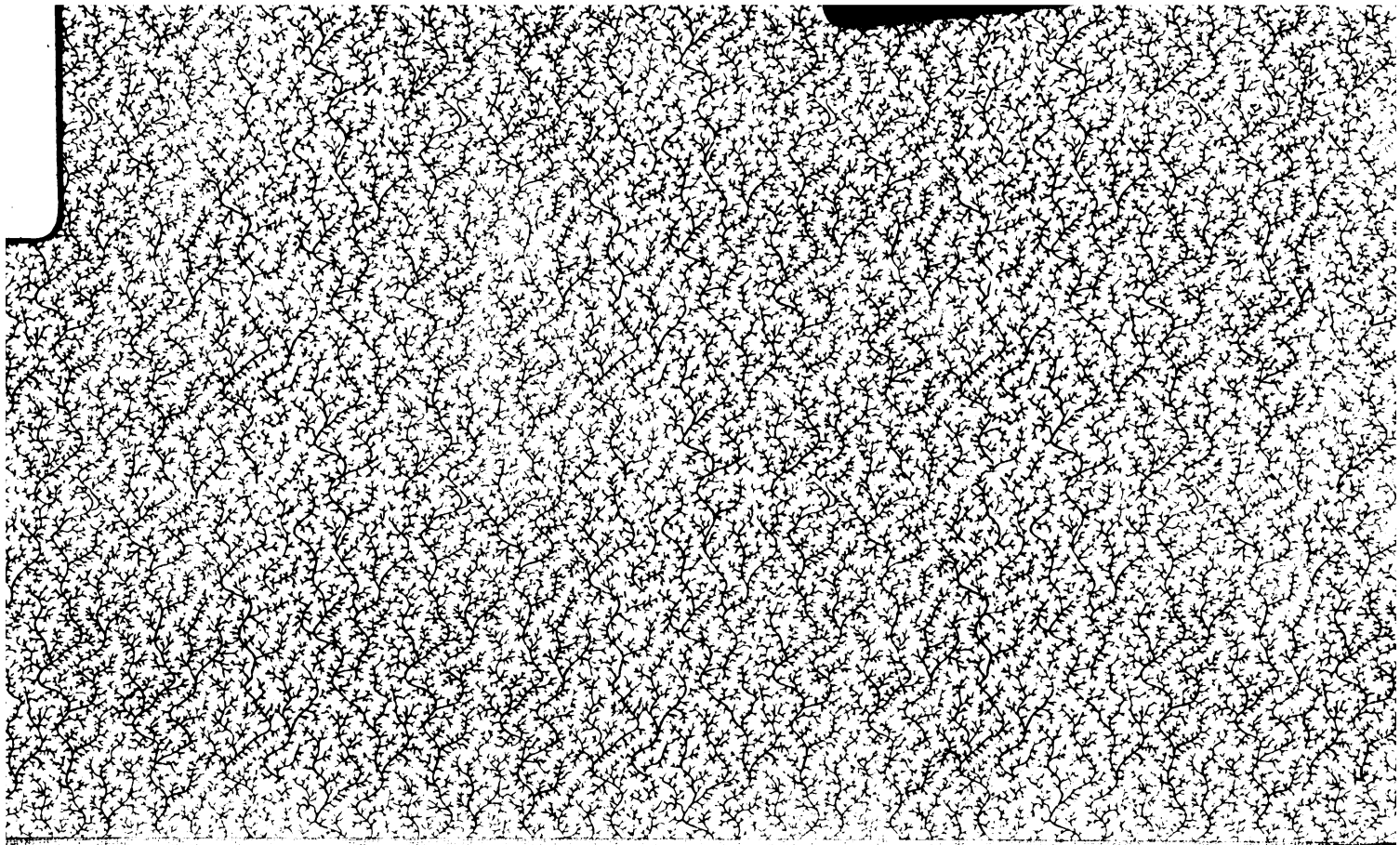

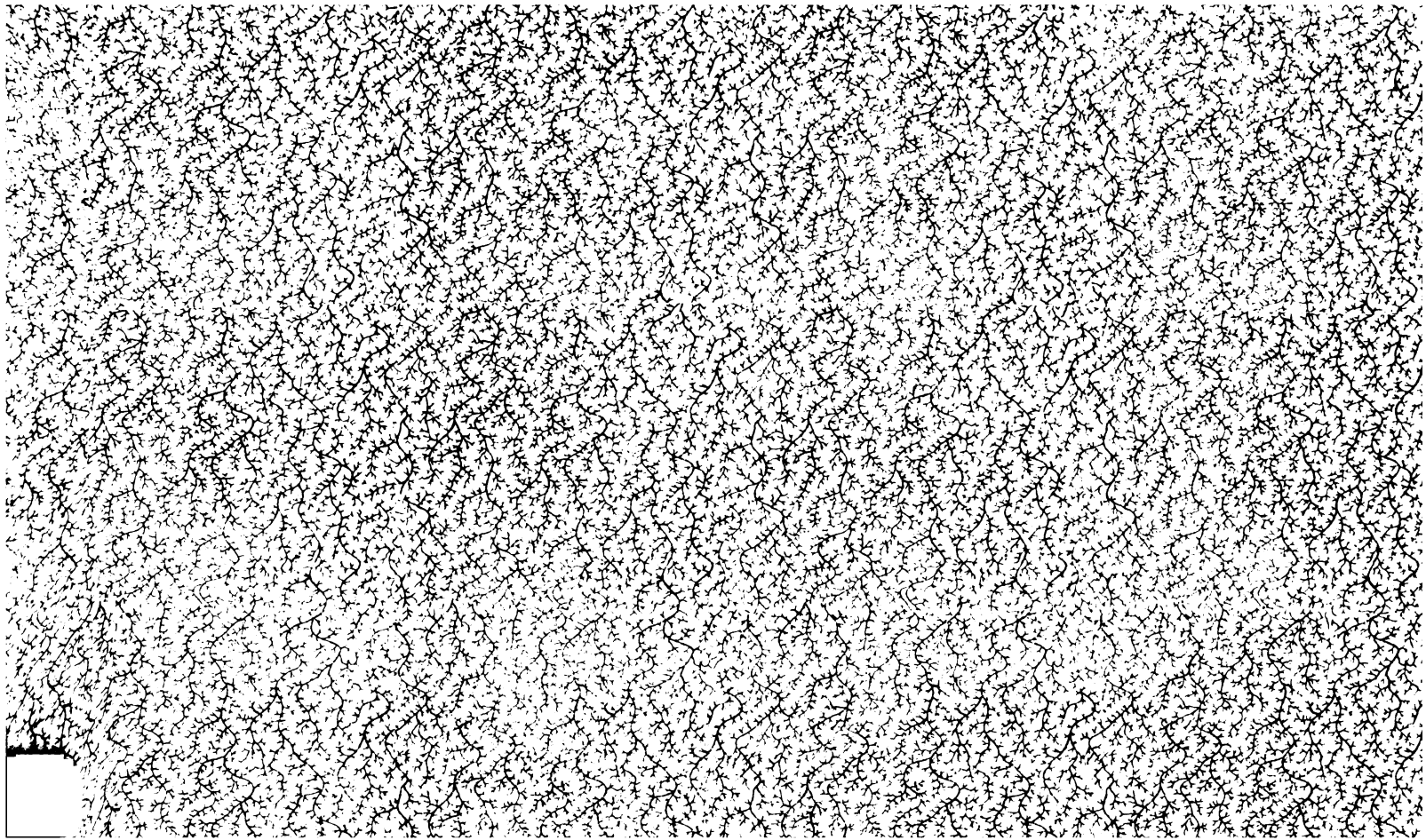

# TWO FAMILY MOTHERS.

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# TWO FAMILY MOTHERS.

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On Norrtull Street is a pretty house with a fine garden where the Professorskan* von Krug, with her husband, daughter, and son, had resided for ten years.

I say the Professorskan with her husband; I will explain. The Professor when young had been an astronomer, but became as he grew older, from inclination to the metaphysical sciences, a philosopher, and so completely incorporated with Aristotle, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel that within his own house he was as if he had not existed. An old man-servant kept his room in order, carried in his coffee, and assisted him at his toilet; otherwise our learned Professor, absorbed as he always was in his researches, might have gone into the street with a boot on one foot and a slipper on the other, with the bow of his cravat round behind, and his dressing-gown as an overcoat. Against all these dangers the old servant was to guard.

In his family the Professor never showed himself except at the table, and then he had his place at the left of his wife, who during the meal was continually obliged to see that he did not take the salt-cellar instead of the sugar-bowl, or pour the gravy on the tablecloth instead of on his plate, or use pepper for snuff and put snuff instead of pepper on his food. With a "Dear *Von* Krug, what are you thinking of?" uttered in a sharp and stern tone, the Professorskan always recalled her husband to reality. In these reminders she never happened to omit the word *von;* on the contrary, the worthy lady laid strong emphasis upon it.

That he had two children was something which the Professor never remembered except when Fru mamma stepped in and said to him in her commanding tone, —

"Dear Von Krug, I must have an order to draw money for Albert's studies or for Albertine's lessons," etc.

Then the Professor would awake from his abstractions, stare at his wife, and mutter, "Albert and Albertine?" as if he now for the first time heard these names.

"Our children, dear Von Krug! God knows what you are thinking of." The Professorskan's voice rose a tone or two higher.

"Just so, — yes, — O yes, — our children," stammered her husband. "How much was it you needed?"

"It is for the children's education that I must take out money. Verily you are the greatest fool that a woman could ever encounter."

"Perfectly correct, very true, you are always right, my dear; but where shall I take the money from? I cannot remember that I have any; that you know best, my dear! Was there anything more you wished to say to me?"

"I declare, Von Krug, if you are not a misfortune to your poor wife! I know well enough that you have no money here, as I attend to the business; but as Herr Ekström persists in regarding you as a person of sense, and is not willing to give me money without your order, I

* The wife of a professor.

now wish to have that order. Do you understand?"

That "Do you understand?" was said in such a way that the Professor jumped up from his chair as if he had received an electric shock, and, thoroughly roused from his abstractions, seized a pen, while his wife dictated the order.

The Professor again plunged into his books and forgot the whole world, his wife and children included, until the old servant brought him back with the words, —

"Her Grace sent me to dress Herr Professor for dinner."

Now, my worthy reader, I hope you have a somewhat clear understanding of Professor von Krug, and why he was called his wife's husband. As in our story he is going to play a rather more important part than people usually accorded him, I have considered it my duty to give you this account of him.

Professorskan Sophie von Krug, *née* Qvickfelt, was of an old and esteemed family, without any property. How the Professor ever came to propose to Fröken Sophie was something which neither he himself nor any other person could comprehend. Had one asked the Professorskan, and she been forced on her conscience to divulge the secret, she would certainly have been obliged to confess that she played the chief part in the courtship, as she very soon began to feel the liveliest sympathy for the poor absent-minded Von Krug, the only son of a very wealthy councillor, who was nearly connected with her father. In short, to the great surprise of the bridegroom himself, they were married.

Now a few words about Fru Sophie. She was a tall, straight, spare woman, who carried herself with gravity. On the long, thin neck was enthroned a large head, which was more suited to a man's than to a woman's form. The brown hair enclosed a tolerably high brow. The small light-gray eyes were sharp and clear as polished steel. The straight nose and the small mouth, with its thin, tightly closed lips, gave to the whole face an expression of indomitable will and imperiousness. It never entered any one's mind when he saw Professorskan von Krug, stiff and straight, advance to meet him, that she could be moved by prayers or tears to deviate a hair's-breadth from any resolution. One was aware that an unbending will dwelt in this soul, as well as a blind confidence in the infallibility of her own judgment, the correctness of her views, and the validity even of the prejudices she entertained. From this high opinion of herself proceeded her unyielding demand that all within her family, all her servants, all her associates, should blindly acknowledge her superiority.

She had, as we mentioned, two children. Albert was the elder, Albertine was full nine years younger. The Professorskan had brought them up with an iron hand, and from their earliest youth had inculcated so blind a respect, that it never occurred to them to express an opinion in opposition to hers. This despotic education had the result, that the children felt fear, never love, for their mother; and made them reserved and full of dissimulation. Such were they during childhood.

Albert grew up from a boy to a youth, and the oppressive yoke which his mother's domination laid upon his soul became to the free and fresh young spirit so intolerable that often in outbursts of indignation he dared to resist it, and, to the great horror of his mother, gave proofs of independence, in stubbornly refusing to submit to her decrees. All this, however, was only an impotent attempt to throw off a yoke which necessity and childish reverence fastened upon him. The first serious conflict which arose between mother and son was on the question of the latter's choice of a vocation.

The Professorskan, who in all her ac-

tions was governed by vanity and pride, had destined her son for a military career. When Albert had gone through his examination, she announced to him her decision in this respect; but she came near fainting when her son declared quite decidedly that he by no means intended to become a soldier, but that he thought of continuing his studies.

"But I do not intend to gratify your desire in this case," said his mother, in a stern and sharp voice; "I will not give you any means for the continuance of your studies, and you ought to see that it is impossible to carry out your plan."

"No, I can study as well as a thousand other poor youths. I will seek a situation as tutor, and can in this way maintain myself afterwards at the academy with my salary, and what I get for the lessons which I intend to give," answered the son, with a firmness as immovable as his mother's.

The Professorskan was obliged to use her smelling-bottle in order not to fall in a swoon at this unheard-of daring of Albert's. She soon rallied, however, and endeavored to bend her son's will to hers; but she met such a stubborn resistance that all her efforts were defeated, for Albert did not swerve a hair's-breadth from his resolution. His mother, however, gave him eight days for consideration.

The very next day Albert had left the paternal roof, and was skimming Mälaren's waves towards Upsala. From there he wrote to the Professorskan that he thought he could obtain sufficient by the sale of his gold watch and chain to support himself in the learned city until he was able to procure pupils.

Now a hard strife arose with the Professorskan between her vanity and her desire to rule. The former rebelled at the idea that *her* son, the rich Professor von Krug's son, should in this way gain the means for his academical studies. What would the world say of it? What would people think of her, when everybody knew how rich her husband was, and that she especially was the one who attended to the money matters? No, it would not do under any circumstances; but to be compelled to yield to her child, to comply with his will, was indeed hard. She felt that this was one of the bitterest moments of her life. Finally, after a violent struggle, the desire to rule had to give way, and she sent her son money, but without writing more than these words: —

"I advise you not to defy me again; for then you will have to pay up for your disrespectful and shameful behavior.

"SOPHIE VON KRUG."

Eight years had passed since this occurrence. Albert had graduated with distinction, and at the time of our story was twenty-seven years of age and entitled Vice-Justice.

His sister, Albertine, a beautiful and stately girl, had never given signs of anything which showed that she had a will of her own, but seemed to be an obedient slave to her mother's authority.

If one contemplated Albertine's fine features and their bold contour, it was difficult to believe in the submission which she constantly showed her mother. The proud, flashing eyes, the little defiant mouth, the high, open brow, the confident bearing, — everything in the young girl's outward appearance indicated an independent and strong soul, which was not created to bear any yoke, or bend beneath any one's will. When one looked into the deep blue, almost black eyes, one read in them an expression of warm feeling, of unusual intellect, and a tender heart.

The Professor's family occupied both floors in the little house in Norrtull Street, an abode which displeased the Professorskan in the highest degree; but in vain had she with the power of language,

sometimes with anger, tried to induce her husband to exchange it for a suite in their house in Queen Street. The Professor, who thought with horror of his beloved philosophers being taken from the places they had occupied for so many years, had once for all declared positively, that if she moved a single chair or made the slightest attempt to vacate the rooms, he would never after that day give her any order to draw money; so she was obliged against her will to content herself with residing in this less aristocratic street.

Professorskan von Krug had, however, during the thirty years she had reigned in this abode, made so many improvements in it, and rendered everything so comfortable and elegant, that her husband, not without reason, called her home a paradise in miniature.

Whether our young Justice Albert, who was obliged, according to mamma's express will, to live at home with his parents, also found this home to possess any likeness to a paradise, we leave to conjecture. And we do not believe we tread too near the truth when we assert that Albertine fancied this name to be a cutting parody on the actual condition.

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One clear and beautiful forenoon in the beginning of June, Fru von Krug and her daughter sat together in a charming little cabinet.

Albertine had her place at the window, and crocheted zealously on a large table-cover. Mamma was enthroned on a little sofa, with her knitting in her hand. It was now the hour for handiwork. The Professorskan had set apart every hour of the day for a certain occupation. They ate at a given stroke of the clock; they sewed, sang and played, walked, read and conversed, all on time. Now, as we mentioned, it was the hour for work, and if it then occurred to Fru von Krug to address her daughter, the latter had the right to answer, although it was not the especial hour for conversation.

"It seems to me that our new gardener is rather too much of a gentleman," said Fru von Krug, and fastened her steel-gray eyes upon her daughter.

"Do you think so, mamma?"

"Yes. But this justice I must do him, that he is very skilful in his calling, and so I suppose I must overlook those gentlemanly airs which, however, are not at all in place with such a fellow."

"But, mamma, you desired to have a gardener who had some culture?"

"*Knowledge* was the word I used, and not culture. Mark that! Culture in an out-door servant! I must confess that you express yourself somewhat strangely, not to say wrongly, and if *you* miss the significance of words, *I* at least never do."

"Pardon me, I did not use the right word," stammered her daughter.

Thereupon followed a pretty long pause, during which Fru von Krug looked at the clock which stood before her.

"Have you observed that he has a son, that *Herr* gardener?" began Fru von Krug again.

"No, I have not."

But at this answer Albertine's cheeks became deep crimson, without Fru mamma's noticing it however.

"That is very natural. Why should you remark such people, or have any knowledge of their family connections? It is quite different with me; I am compelled to know all about every one in my service, so that no disreputable person may pollute my home."

The Professorskan brought her handkerchief to her nose with a motion of indescribable dignity.

"It really rouses one's indignation," resumed she, "to see such people's children study, and by this means try to gain a position in society equal to that which we, who are born of a good family, occupy. That gardener's son is said to be a physician."

"Is it not very commendable in him to try to ennoble himself by his knowledge?"

"What was that you said?" exclaimed Fru von Krug, and flung a glance at her daughter as keen as a dagger. "I think you uttered something very stupid, and I beg to be excused from such thoughts and expressions. They are unbecoming in a girl of family, and contain extreme disrespect for the parents who have given you life and afforded you an elevated position in society."

The clock now struck one. The Professorskan rolled up her knitting; but Albertine continued to crochet.

"Did you not hear the clock strike?" asked her mother.

"I beg to be allowed to do a few loops more; otherwise I shall lose my count and make myself new trouble when I begin again."

"It cannot be. Put up your work immediately!"

Albertine did so with a sigh.

A servant was seen in the door, who said, —

"Her Grace's carriage is waiting."

"That is well," answered the mistress of the house.

The servant withdrew, and Fru von Krug said, turning to her daughter, —

"You may walk an hour in the garden to-day. I am going to make some calls. Now go up to your room and put on your hat. Two o'clock is the hour for your practice. Adieu!"

Fru von Krug bent her head majestically, and went with a stiff bearing out of the room and up to her bedchamber.

When the door was closed after her mother, Albertine drew a deep sigh full of relief, and flew with swift steps up to her room, after she had first heard the door of her mother's closed again.

In every corner of Albertine's apartment, arranged with stern symmetry, one found traces of the mother's taste, and nothing which denoted a young girl's pretty retreat. All of the charming accessories, which usually distinguish the room of a maiden of nineteen, were banished from Albertine's. No flowers adorned it, no bird sang its glad song there, no little book-shelf indicated that the owner often occupied herself with the celebrated authors of her own and other lands. No; costly, massive furniture, placed in a line against the wall, heavy damask curtains, and a toilet-stand covered with articles of silver constituted the upholstery. There was over the whole something cold and stiff, which drove away all comfort.

Albertine threw herself down on the sofa, flung the two cushions far from her, shoved the foot-stools out on the floor, and then pressed both hands against her breast, while she whispered to herself, "O my God, such a slave's life!" Then she sprang up, pushed the easy-chairs energetically from their appointed places, turned the valuables on the dressing-table upside down, and in this way called forth complete disorder in the room. At the same moment that the young girl gave vent to her rebellious feelings in moving all that there was in the room from the places designated by her mother, a carriage was heard, and she saw her mother drive away. Just then the door opened, and a young girl of Albertine's age, with an Italian straw hat on her head, and a little summer cape on her arm, entered the room.

"Now Fru mamma has taken her departure and we can breathe a little freer. Here we have our hats and capes, with the gracious command immediately to go down to the garden for a walk." The girl nodded mischievously at Albertine.

"God knows where you get your cheerful disposition from, Minna! At least you do not have it especially pleasant here," said Albertine, and tied her hat with evident eagerness.

"I get it from my nineteen years, which her Grace cannot take from me, and from my affection for my foster-

sister. Now go; down there at the greenhouse is some one, who is anxiously looking towards the broad walk."

Albertine colored, gave Minna a friendly nod, and left the room light as a bird.

When Ma'mselle Minna was alone, she seized a chair and began to waltz with it around the room, while she laughed heartily and in her soul thought, —

"How jolly it is to play gracious mamma a trick! Yes, I shall surely become crazy from joy if Albertine marries Gardener Bergström's son. Gracious mamma will be attacked with paralysis in consequence, but that does not hinder Albertine from being happy. I should, in the joy at seeing that wicked old woman dead, almost be disposed to join the mourners."

Now she threw the chair from her, stopped abruptly in the dance, and sprang to the mirror, where she began to arrange her hair in all possible ways, while she sang a merry song.

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While Minna was amusing herself as best she could up in Albertine's room, the latter had proceeded to the garden. In the large path she slackened her pace somewhat and looked timidly around her. At the end of it was seen the greenhouse, and it was there that *he*, according to what Minna said, was to be found. Albertine stopped a minute, as if she hesitated, but immediately continued her way again straight to the greenhouse. On reaching the grassy place outside of it, she met a young man. He took off his light summer hat, and said, half smiling, half sadly, —

"I feared that I should not see you today, and had already given up all hope, when at length I heard the carriage roll away."

Albertine extended her hand with a friendly glance.

"I also entertained the same fear, especially as we shall soon be deprived of these pleasant moments, when mamma and I leave the city."

"Who knows, Albertine, whether I shall not follow you as faithfully, wherever you go, as I have already done for three whole years." He had kept her hand in his and raised it to his lips. Both seated themselves on a bench.

"But you know that we are going to Rönby, and shall spend the summer there with my uncle, Major Qvickfelt?"

"Yes, but that does not hinder me from going down to Rönby in three days' time, to take the place of the present physician, who has fallen ill. The Major has invited me to spend the summer with him." Richard looked mischievously at Albertine, and added, "Was it not well arranged?"

"Ah, it will be perfectly splendid!" exclaimed Albertine, gladly. "I see now, Richard, that you love me warmly and sincerely."

"With all my heart, that you know; but where will this love of mine lead me? What will be the reward for my faithful attachment?"

"My heart, which you already possess; my hand, which never shall belong to any one but you."

"Albertine, you gave me these promises when you were still too much of a child to judge clearly of the obstacles in the way of such a union, and I loved you altogether too deeply even for an instant to allow my reason to govern my feelings. I have loved you without thinking of the future, without wishing to see the chasm which separated us. But now —"

"Now you love me less!" exclaimed Albertine, growing pale.

"No, my noble, high-minded girl, I love you more and more every day, but —" He again raised her hand to his lips.

"But?"

"But since my father, two months ago, came into your mother's service, I have learned to know this proud and unbend-

ing woman, to whose heart and love you will appeal in vain. Do you really believe that anything but her pride will decide in the choice of a mate for you?"

"Yes, I do believe it!" answered Albertine proudly, and raised her beautiful head daringly, "for she will never be able to force a consent over my lips to a union that my heart rejects. I shall say 'No,' were it even at the altar itself, in case it should go so far; that I promise you, in the name of God."

"Thanks!" Again the little hand was covered with kisses.

"I know, Richard, that people consider me without will, like an automaton in my mother's hand, but they are mistaken. In every instance, where, without infringing the right, I have been able to comply with her will, I have done so; and I have often done violence to my feelings, and stifled my rebellious thoughts within my own breast, so that I should not irritate her, or waste my own powers in an aimless strife. But when it comes to concern honor, the interests precious to my future, then I shall have the strength to contend. This conflict will, perhaps, be terrible, but God, who reads my heart, knows that this heart will never allow any one to sell it, either from pride or for the sake of any worldly advantage. I should be cowardly and contemptible if, from a pitiful weakness, I let another person's will become a law to me in anything so important as the choice of a husband."

"But, my beloved Albertine, even if your courage and your steadfastness were able to resist your mother's will in the forming of an alliance, you would still never succeed in obtaining her consent to a union with me."

"It is true that I shall not obtain this consent this year, nor next year, nor the year after; but we are young, we can wait, and I know that if I do not get her consent before, it will be when you, as a skilful and distinguished physician, have won public esteem and an honored name. Yes, even if I am obliged to wait many years for this consent, I will bide my time patiently and faithfully, consoled by the hope that I shall some time, even if late, become your wife."

"But these years, will they not cause your thoughts to vibrate, and, in a long-continued struggle, weaken your courage?"

"Never! The Richard I loved at sixteen, I shall love in death. Time cannot annihilate a love like mine. No, it is a part of my very being. Time may rob my cheek of its youth and beauty, but it cannot drive the love for my Richard from my heart."

"But ought I to accept this offer? ought I to demand that, from love for me, you shall subject youself to pain and anguish without name, that your youth's joyous days shall disappear in the vain expectation of realizing a childhood's dream of happiness and bliss? And finally, in case you some time reach the desired aim, my now so beautiful, so luxuriant rose, the ability to enjoy happiness has perhaps forever died out within you."

Albertine laid her hand on his arm, and fastened her dark eyes upon him with an expression of deep seriousness, as she replied, —

"As long as you love me, there is no anguish which I shall not bear with patience; and no suffering can kill my feelings, or take away the impression of my felicity, when I once attain the object of my hopes, and am allowed before the altar to give my hand to the only being I ever loved."

"And I should not be worthy this elevated love, if I ever could cease to love you." Richard placed Albertine's hand on his heart. "So long as this heart beats, shall it belong to you alone; and if fate should separate us, if slander should try to force you to distrust me, swear to me that you will never allow doubt to find room in your soul, but let faith in me

stand at the side of your love, and protect it from suspicion's dark power; recollect, before all, that I never, never shall deceive you!"

"I promise. The loss of faith in you would be the death-blow to my love. Ah, Richard! If you knew how high I place you in my thoughts, how blind my confidence is in you!"

They continued their sweet communion, until they were suddenly interrupted by a carriage which drove into the court-yard.

"My mother!" exclaimed Albertine, and rose hastily from the bench.

"Farewell, my beloved," whispered, Richard, and went away, after he had pressed another hearty kiss on the young girl's hand.

Albertine, who during the conversation had entirely forgotten time, now remembered with alarm that the clock might possibly have passed the hour fixed for her walk. At the gate she met her mother, who with fiery cheeks and her watch in hand came towards her daughter.

"So you are out walking yet, although it is a quarter past two? What is the meaning of this? I believe that you dare to violate my commands and take a liberty which I am by no means in the humor to endure. Answer then, what does this disobedience signify? Why are you not sitting at the instrument? Answer, or are you dumb?"

"Dear mamma, I did not know that it was so late," Albertine ventured to answer.

"Did you not? Where, then, is your watch?"

"I left it in my room."

"Go up immediately and play."

The Professorskan made a commanding gesture, and Albertine hastened into the house. The worthy lady did not follow her into the saloon, but directed her steps up to the second floor, where the private rooms were. When she went past the door of Albertine's room, she heard from there the sound of a joyous, youthful voice, singing, —

"And mamma herself did just the same,
Though many a year ago."

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Fru Sophie, and turned to an elderly woman, who with a smiling and humble appearance followed close in her rear.

"It is Ma'mselle Minna, who cheers herself up while your Grace is away," answered Ma'mselle Martha, with an expression of deep disapproval.

"Ah, indeed, she is accustomed to cheer herself up?" The Professorskan did not say more, but from the compressed lips it could be seen that she was disposed to cheer up Ma'mselle Minna in her turn. She laid her hand on the knob of Albertine's door and it flew open.

There stood Minna before the glass, arrayed in Albertine's new hat and beautiful velvet mantle, while she made the most coquettish bends of the head, smiled at her image, and sang. She had not heard the door open, and just now swung round to regard her right charming image from the side, but found herself at this face to face with — her Grace.

Minna stopped in the midst of a pirouette, and ceased her song abruptly. She resembled a statue of terror. Her eyes stared with affright at the irritated mistress who stood in the door.

It must be admitted that Minna had every reason in the world to look frightened. First, she was so surprised, dressed in her young Fröken's clothes, and engaged in looking at herself in the glass; and then, then, what fearful disorder in the whole room, where the sofa-cushions were still on the floor, the footstools turned upside down, and all the chairs in the middle of the floor, not to speak of the toilet-stand, where all the knick-knacks were thrown about in the most terrible way!

"May I be allowed to know what you are doing here? I verily believe that it is my daughter's clothes you have on. But

it must be a mistake; it is not possible that a domestic in *my* house would take such a liberty."

At these words a deep flush burned on the young girl's cheeks, and she threw a challenging glance at the Professorskan as she answered fearlessly, —

"I have, indeed, Albertine's hat and mantle on."

"Who gave you leave to call my daughter simply Albertine?" screamed the Professorskan, and took a step nearer the young girl.

"It is a habit I have maintained from childhood," answered Minna defiantly, as she took off the hat and mantle. At the same moment her Grace's hand fell with a sharp sound on the young girl's cheek, and she said, —

"Shameless creature, you shall leave my house immediately!"

"Am I to be driven away like a dog?" exclaimed the poor girl, with her eyes flashing with tears and indignation.

"Yes; you are a thankless piece, with bad habits and a bold manner. I have put up with you long enough out of charity; now you shall go, and that on the instant." Her Grace turned to leave the room; but Minna sprang after her and seized her hand, while a flood of tears streamed down her cheeks. She entreated, —

"Forgive me. Do not thrust me out into the world. I have neither parents, home, nor relatives. From mercy, your Grace, pardon my bad behavior, I repent it bitterly; I promise with diligence and humility to make amends for it. Only allow me to remain here where I grew up." Minna had almost sunk down on her knees; but the Professorskan snatched away her hand, and said with hardness, —

"You shall remove immediately; but to show you how good I am, I will pay your board in some respectable place until you get a situation. I do not wish people to say of me that I turned any one into the street; *but you must* be out of my house within an hour. You can stay with Martha's sister until you get a place."

Minna covered her face with her hands, and burst into violent sobs. Her Grace took a few steps towards the door; but on the threshold stood a young man with something energetic and unbending in his features.

"Mother," said the young man, "forgive Minna!"

"Albert! go into your room and do not meddle in my affairs. You know that I do not tolerate it. My house and my servants *I* govern, and no one else."

"Go, Martha," said Albert with a short, commanding voice to the old domestic. He then stepped into Albertine's room, closed the door after him, and said in a calm tone, —

"Once more, mamma, forgive Minna; recollect that she must not be allowed to leave our house."

"Must she not!" shrieked the Professorskan. "Well, you will see."

Albert bent down to his mother and whispered some words in her ear. The Professorskan started, as if she had been stung, and stared a moment at her son; but recovered herself immediately and said in her short, sharp way to Minna, —

"Go down to your room and stay there until I send for you. Send up Martha."

Stiff and straight the Professorskan went out of the room and into her own.

"Thanks!" whispered Minna, and would have raised Albert's hand to her lips.

"Not much to thank me for, dear Minna; but if you are really so anxious about your place here, then be less refractory in your behavior, and show my mother henceforth more submission and respect."

"I promise it," stammered Minna, and hurried down the stairs with an expression of deep pain in her recently so joyous face.

Professorskan von Krug had sunk down on a sofa in the little boudoir adjoining her sleeping-room, and murmured to herself, —

"And I, who believed myself to have buried that secret, — I, who believed that it slept with her in the grave. How has he learned it?"

Martha entered. Her Grace fastened her sharp eyes upon her with a searching expression, —

"Listen, Martha; it seems that you have not been able to keep silent? You have spoken of the dead to my son? Did you think that you could do this with impunity? If you think that I shall forgive your loquacity, you are much mistaken."

"Your Grace, as certain as I hope to be saved, I have never let the name of the dead go over my lips since that evening, when you made me swear by her coffin."

"And yet Albert knows whose child Minna is?"

"No person has learned that from me; I can take my oath upon that at the altar. Your Grace, who have had me as a servant ever since your girlhood, ought to know old Martha well enough to feel assured that she can keep things to herself."

"Good, that is well! You know also, that only as a faithful and zealous person can you count upon me."

"Yes! I know it." Martha courtesied and looked hypocritical.

"Now I wish to find out how Albert gained a knowledge of that unhappy secret. You must procure me this intelligence."

"How is that to be done?"

"Think of those who were in connection with that wretch, the girl's father, and try to remember the names of the whole set."

"I shall endeavor to. Is there anything further that your Grace commands?"

"No! send Minna up to me."

A deluge of reproaches streamed from the lips of the deeply offended mistress upon poor Minna, and not until she had seen the young girl creep in the dust before her, completely humiliated and repentant, did she act as if she relented so far as to keep her in the house.

At the dinner-table the Professorskan sat straight and stiff in her place, and the reminders to her husband were made in a sharper and harder voice than usual.

Her lips were thinner and more tightly pressed together than before. The look she now and then directed upon her son seemed to wish to penetrate to the depths of his soul. The dinner was more silent and tedious than usual.

Albertine had received a stern reprimand for the disorder in her room and for having stayed in the garden a whole quarter of an hour over the stated time.

Our young Justice, when he ventured to address Fru mamma, had also received a sharp and cutting answer.

At length the four courses, which the Professorskan considered indispensable for every dinner, as a necessary condition for the upholding of her dignity, were over, and they rose from the table.

One and all repaired to their rooms, to divert themselves as they chose, while the mistress of the house took her usual siesta. They then gathered in the cabinet to drink coffee and converse an hour. After the conversation Albert generally went to his room, and Albertine gave an hour to her music. Then the mother and daughter sat two hours at their work and were ready for callers, the days when the "visit-box" * was taken in. When tea had been served, the reading hour came, and finally the supper, after which followed a half-hour's conversation, and then they bade each other good night and again betook themselves to their own rooms. Thus passed the time,

* When this box is hung out, callers must simply leave their cards.

without any interruptions save those which invitations occasioned; and interminably long were these days for the young people, especially for Albertine, who, like a slave to his yoke, was nailed fast to her mother's side. But to return to the above-mentioned afternoon.

Fru mamma had withdrawn to her own room. Albertine sat in hers, absorbed in the perusal of a newly published romance (smuggled goods which Albert procured his sister to amuse herself with). She had scarcely had time to open the book, when the door-knob was softly turned and her brother approached her.

"Good Heavens, Albert, is that you?" exclaimed Albertine. "Think if mamma heard you come in here. This time of day she does not allow us to be together. You ought to know that it is the hour for solitude and meditation." It was impossible for Albertine to keep from smiling.

"I have the honor to know all this, my dear Albertine; but that does not hinder me to-day from infringing the law," said Albert, and seated himself, laughing, on his sister's sofa, "so much the more as it is quite likely that I shall wage a severe battle with mother at the conversation hour."

"Dear Albert, not to-day. She is irritated already, and if possible is more intractable than usual. If you have anything to say that is in conflict with her views, then postpone it."

"No, little sister, she and I have already come into collision to-day, and it is as well to let the mine spring at once."

"But what is it then that you intend to say to her?" asked his sister, and looked anxious.

"Not particularly much; only that I am going abroad in two or three months, and that I can no longer impose upon myself the constraint of residing so far from the superior court."

"Then you abandon me!"

"No, never. Believe me, I serve you far less by constantly making myself a slave to my mother's authority, than if I placed myself on an independent footing, and freed myself from a will whose oppressive yoke my masculine mind cannot endure. Besides, Albertine, I should not know you, if I believed you to be a weak girl, needing the assistance of others to keep up your courage. My own sister, I should then have failed entirely in the education which I have given you behind gracious mamma's back, the aim of which was to develop your fortitude and make you a strong, self-reliant woman, not a delicate and sickly being, who has need of a support her whole life through. No, you needed firmness of character, in order one day to be able to contend against a hard and unbending mother's caprices and tyranny."

"In this you are right, and I believe that I am able to sustain the struggle alone, however hard it may be; but our pleasant afternoon moments, when mamma is taking her nap, what shall compensate me for these, when you are gone? Ah, Albert, they have constituted the only joy of my desolate youth."

"Albertine, I shall spend two evenings with you every week. Let us now talk about yourself."

"Ah! there is not very much to say about me," sighed Albertine.

"O well, not so little either. Do you feel yourself really faithful in your love for Richard Bergström? Are you right sure that your heart is earnestly attached to him?" Albert had taken both her hands, and looked searchingly into his sister's eyes.

"Yes, so earnestly that no one on earth can induce me to break my promise."

"Good, I like to hear you talk so; but have you taken into contemplation all the difficulties which will meet you?"

"Yes, all!"

"Bravo! you are actually of the same

blood as I; but recollect, you will never obtain mother's consent to this union, and you probably do not think of marrying Richard without her permission."

"No, my brother; but I feel that I am able to contend for my love."

"Even without success?"

"Who knows what time may do? I am as strong in my will and as inflexible in my resolutions as my mother."

"I do not doubt it; but, during the contest, time will roll on and you as well as Richard will become old."

"Albert, we shall in the end, if not until the evening of our lives, be united. Yes, I find something sublime in these unions, of which the first link was tied in life's spring, but the last at its autumn."

"You are a singular girl, to be able to reason so calmly over the obstacles which rise before the attainment of your life's happiness. Your love must be of the true Northern sort."

"Ah, you foolish Albert, how you talk! If you could measure the depth of my love, its warmth and strength, how different you would then judge."

"And yet this submissive waiting, this long patience!"

"I have not promised any submissive waiting, any calm patience, nor any fruitless strife. No, when the moment is at hand to throw off the mask, I shall do it and conquer; for I have purchased the right to choose a mate for myself by the calmness, the patience with which I have borne oppression. If I am even obliged to wait twenty years, I shall never become the wife of any one but Richard."

"You speak actually like *my* pupil. You are an honor to me, my child! God grant that you may not one day, through some violent pressure on your heart's fibres, be forced to transcend the limits you have now yourself set up. *I* should never be able to wait."

"You would then, without caring to conquer mamma, take the mate which your heart had chosen, against her will?"

"Yes!" Albert passed his hand over his brow. "But, once more, do not speak of me! Do you know the reason why mother has this year invited herself to uncle's?"

"No! this measure of hers has surprised me very much, for they say that ever since uncle's marriage twenty-six years ago, she has not set foot inside his door."

"Because he was low enough to marry a country parson's daughter."

"O, I see," jested Albertine; "Ma'mselle Pehrsson was a grand-daughter of the peasant Pehr Mattsson, and uncle a Qvickfelt, with even a titled branch on his family-tree."

"Oho, Sister Albertine; the Bergström name is plebeian enough, and the family-tree is not much better than Aunt Malin's, for the father of your chosen one is — a gardener."

Albertine began to laugh heartily, and Albert continued, —

"Unfortunate sympathy for the people and their children, and this with us, who have received an ultra aristocratic education.

"In all despotic countries the spirit of revolt awakens sooner or later. Oppression is an entirely wrong means in case the object is to convince the oppressed of the justness of the principles one tries to instil into them by force.

"I should n't be at all surprised if I married Martha some fine day, merely to exhibit my liberal views, which are truly in direct opposition to those I have heard preached from the time I went in frocks."

"But you have not yet told me why we are now, after so many years, to reconcile ourselves to Aunt Malin's low origin."

"For the reason, my dear, that Baron Silfverkrona's prospective estate borders on uncle's. Besides, the Baron is a daily

guest at Rönby; he has grown up with uncle's children, and is perfectly charmed with aunt; all of which he communicated to mamma last winter during his stay here."

"Well?" Albertine looked at her brother.

"I believe that you are more than pardonably stupid, my dear sister! The Baron is a bachelor; I suppose you know that?"

"More than well," answered Albertine, blushing.

"The Baron has been pleased to show Fröken von Krug more attention than any other young lady in the circle where he has met her. Perhaps you have some slight knowledge of that?"

"Very little."

"And mamma would like above all things to see her daughter married to a baron, especially as said Baron is immensely rich and has a stately appearance, besides being nearly related to the Stormhjelms and several other branches of the nobility; which latter, in mamma's eyes, probably constitutes his greatest merit."

"Very likely; but in this respect I do not share her opinion."

"That is of no consequence. A certain person is to go to Rönby either with or against her will, and stifle her repugnance to the plebeian sister-in-law; and hopes to bring her daughter home betrothed to the rich Baron. She must absolutely make this journey, because the Baron intends to remain in the country and not honor the capital with his presence next winter, so that all prospects of getting him for a son-in-law would have gone up in smoke if she had not made up her mind to sacrifice her prejudice for Aunt Malin."

"But all this is simply illusions, which will never be realized. And how dreadfully tedious it will be there! what scenes! how —"

The door was thrown *open*, and the Professorskan's stiff and threatening form appeared. She advanced to the middle of the floor, and said in her short, hard tone, —

"It would seem as if people to-day wished to try my patience to the utmost, by trampling all my commands under foot. Am I no longer the one who gives the law in my own house? Shall my children openly defy my will? How comes it that you are here at this hour?" asked she, turning to her son.

"Because, mother, I desired to talk awhile with *my sister*."

"But you know that I do not suffer any one to violate the regulations I have established, and what you had to say to *your sister* was certainly not so important that you could not postpone it until the conversation hour."

"Dear mother, we could not then have spoken so unrestrainedly about everything which enters our minds."

"Just such unrestrained talk is unnecessary, yes, even out of place; for it gives occasion to presumptuous reflections, which in my eyes are improper, and I will not hear of any secret conversations in my house, — do you understand?"

The Justice bowed in silence, but a slight flush drew over his proud brow.

"Now leave your sister's room."

"Directly! I only desired to ask an hour's private conversation with you."

"While Albertine is practising you will have an opportunity to talk with me. What is that?" added the Professorskan with a frown, as her eyes fell on the book which Albertine was reading when her brother came in.

"One of Walter Scott's novels. I have given it to Albertine to read, so that she may receive *something* that resembles culture," answered Albert.

The Professorskan's small gray eyes widened, and she threw her head back, so as steadily to regard the daring individual who had ventured this unheard-of act, and crush him with her look.

"So you meddle in your sister's education?"

"Somewhat; at least so far as it concerns the main elements of literary culture, which are with Albertine extremely neglected. We live in a time, mother, when one demands of woman something more than that she shall be able to crochet, draw, embroider, play the piano, and behave according to the conventional rules of society. One demands that she shall be a thinking being, with a knowledge of what has occurred and is now going on in the world."

"Have you finished?"

"Ah, there is much more to be said about that matter; but in this standing posture I have nothing further to add."

"*You* actually consider yourself better able to judge of what is lacking in your sister's education than *I*. You do not accord me judgment enough to know what she ought to learn or not. You do not think that your mother has a sufficiently clear understanding to be able to educate her daughter without your guidance, as you appear with opinions directly opposed to those *I* approve, and thus promote what I condemn! I disapprove of all novel-reading, for I consider it injurious, pernicious, and incompatible with the requirements of morality. I myself have never read a novel, and I hope you will not on that account deny that I possess the true worth, which all adjudge me." The Professorskan took the book, handed it to her son, and said: "Take back a work which you gave your sister to read against my will, and do not meddle too much in that which I alone desire to attend to; for this might possibly bring you into trouble. As far as you are concerned, Albertine, your punishment will be to spend the afternoon in your room. You have to-day transgressed my orders threefold, and one is never too old to be punished for disobedience *towards a mother.*"

The Professorskan left the room wi
Albert, who in a dark frame of mi
accompanied her.

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The mother and son drank coffee a
alone, for the Professorskan, as we men
tioned, was never seen in the famil
except at the dinner-table.

With a clouded brow the Professorska
sat on the sofa and sipped her coffe
Albert emptied his cup in silence. Afte
the servant had withdrawn with the tray
and her Grace had given the order tha
coffee should be carried up to the Frö
ken, she looked at her watch and said t
her son, —

"What you have to say we can discus
now as well as to choose some other sub
ject of conversation, as we must spen
this hour together."

"As you command, mother," replie
Albert and leaned back in his easy-chair.
"This communication concerns me alone
I desired to tell you of two resolution
that I have taken."

"O yes, you first take your resolu
tions and tell me of them afterwards,
without knowing whether I approve o
am even disposed to give my consent t
them."

"So far as they concern me personally,
I believe myself at twenty-eight to hav
reached the age when I can decide some
what over my actions. As a *man* I cer
tainly do not need to ask leave for al
that I do, like a boy yet in his minority.
This you, mother, with your clear judg
ment, must realize perfectly well."

"My clear judgment tells me that one
so long as the parents live, owes them
obedience."

"Yes, in everything where by disobedi
ence he would show them lack of respect;
but if the parents drive their claims upo
obedience so far that, out of caprice, the
oppose what is of benefit to their full
grown son, then it seems to me that a

my age, he really has the right to mingle a little in his own affairs."

"Indeed! You mean to indicate by this that I act according to caprice. Verily, my dear son, if you are not the first who has thought, still less dared to utter, any such thing about me, of whom people generally testify that I only allow reason and good sense to prevail in all my actions. But this is not the first time that you have been guilty of a shocking insolence towards your mother. Still I had expected a different result from the serious and methodical education, free from all weakness, which I have given you. Shall I, who have guided you with an invariable strictness, see myself treated as if I had been a foolish and over-indulgent mother?"

"Mother," said the Justice, rising hastily, "allow your son for a moment to speak out what he is prompted to say from love for you and Albertine, as he wishes to draw your attention to the fault which you have committed in bringing up your children with this inexorable sternness!"

"Not a word further on this subject!" exclaimed the Professorskan, starting up. "I am not one to sit still patiently and allow myself to be upbraided by an ungrateful and shameless child. If you have nothing else to say to me, then — there is the door! Do not think that you can overawe me. I know my own value too well, not to feel that your place would be to lie at my feet and beg forgiveness for having already, in the choice of your career, dared to defy my will. This I have not forgotten, and never shall forget. What is it that you intend to communicate to me? Say it quickly, and leave out *all* that does not concern the matter! Deliver me from all your remarks, for I tell you sternly and decidedly, I will not hear anything of the kind!"

"Why with this sternness continually banish all confidence?" exclaimed Albert.

"Do you not understand what I have just said, when I commanded you simply to speak of what concerns you personally, and not of anything else? I now command you absolutely to keep silent, in case you have nothing to utter but pathetic exclamations about my sternness."

"Be it as you command then," replied the Justice, whose face had now acquired as cold and hard a stamp as his mother's. "I have decided to take a journey abroad, and shall start Thursday."

The Professorskan seated herself again on the sofa with compressed lips and a frowning brow, without saying a word further.

"I shall probably be away two or three months, which of the two I cannot tell precisely; but for the autumn I have hired a little suite of bachelor apartments at Riddarhus Square, and I desire that my servant, before I return, may move my furniture and books, which are now in my room here at home, together with the new I have purchased, so that I can find my abode in order on my arrival in Sweden. I cannot possibly continue to reside here, so far from court."

"You move away from your parents, then hire a suite of rooms, buy furniture, etc., etc., all without consulting me, and without knowing whether I intend to allow all these measures of yours?"

"Allow, mother!" Albert looked at his mother with an expression of inflexibility in every feature, which was faithfully reflected in hers. "I think that I declared plainly enough, in the beginning of our conversation, that I am now a *man* and not a child."

"In other words, you consider that I no longer have the right to meddle in your affairs, and that it is not your duty to submit to my will, — a somewhat too daring declaration, my son."

"How so? One must some time cast off leading-strings, and attempt to go alone. Verily, I do not consider it any

too early, when a man approaches his thirtieth year."

"But I desire to know who is to defray the expense of the new establishment, your foreign journey, and your housekeeping?"

"I myself, mother."

"And with what? Do not calculate that the yearly allowance you now draw from Herr Ekström will continue after you have drawn my anger upon you by such refractory behavior. If you withdraw from my supervision and influence, you must be prepared to see me withhold that support."

"This you are free to do, for my income is now so large that I am perfectly independent in a pecuniary respect, — something I never should have been, if you had succeded in making me a military man."

"And your income is sufficient for your foreign journey also? Or perhaps you, like other perverted young men, borrow on the prospect of an inheritance? But I beg of you, do not count too surely upon that; for you do not yet know what I, in my righteous indignation, may find myself prompted to do."

The son raised his handsome head proudly, and fixed his dark eyes on his mother with an expression almost more than serious.

"Albert von Krug does not need to borrow so long as his father lives. And even if he had no father, but was a young man without property, he is too proud to live on credit. No, he would then stay at home, until he succeeded, by work and application, in saving a sum large enough for a journey abroad. As it is, I have not needed to over-exert myself, but I have received from *my father* an order for 2,000 rix-dollars for this purpose."

"From your father!" screamed, rather than exclaimed, the Professorskan, springing up. "*From your father!* Has your father, without me, given you an order? Have you, without my permission, without speaking to me, dared to turn to him? Him, who cannot be considered quite in his senses! Do you understand how you have insulted me by this? I declare that you have not the right to draw this money; that the order is not valid, because a fool made it out at your demand."

"Hold, mother! The order is as legal as that on which you receive money, and my father certainly stands as near to me as my mother, I should think. That I turn to him in such a case is more natural than that I should turn to you. 'A fool,' you say. It is not to a son that such words ought to be uttered about a father, whose only fault consists in his learning."

"Go, I have heard enough!" burst out the Professorskan, pale with anger.

"My mother!"

"Go, or I will have you shown out by one of my servants! It is yet I who command."

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After Albert left his mother, she remained sitting a long time with her head leaning on her hand. She pressed her lips together harder and harder, as if to keep back the anger which boiled within her. Finally she rose and approached the door, muttering, —

"Well, this is a glorious beginning, but I shall prevent all such appeals to Von Krug directly, for it would entirely crush my power, and reduce me to a cipher in my own house. Am I created to play a subordinate part, to allow myself to be shuffled about by husband and children? No! I have given the young gentleman too free a rein; he may avail himself of my negligence now, but I shall show him that he must some time bend in the dust before his mother, *man* as he thinks himself."

The Professsorskan had, during this monologue, gone up the stairs, and into her

husband's outer room. This was virtually a large library, its walls covered with book-shelves from floor to ceiling. A little sofa on castors stood in the middle of the room; before it was a large round table, and around this were a half-dozen arm-chairs. Here the Professor received his learned friends; and in this room the solitary and studious man had passed his most agreeable moments, when he had an opportunity of conversing with men who interested themselves in that which constituted the object of all his thoughts and dreams. At such times he was not a wandering and absent-minded fool, as his wife considered him, but a man of intellect, from whose lips flowed eloquence and learning. Then the deep-set, clear-blue eyes shone with intelligence and life, and on the broad brow genius sat enthroned.

The Professor was, as the reader has heard before, an astronomer by profession; but his thirst for knowledge, his passion for scientific studies, had made him desire more than any single branch of science could offer. He had therefore studied logic, philosophy, etc., with zeal. The more he was absorbed in one science after another, the more strange became the world around him, so that he often entirely forgot that he had a family. His thoughts scarcely ever fell on his wife and children, except when they made themselves remembered, and roused him from the world in which his soul loved to live.

Had the Professor obtained a wife who entertained respect for his knowledge, and who approached him with mildness and love, he would without doubt not have isolated himself so completely from those around him. His heart would also have been allowed to raise its voice, and domestic happiness would certainly have warmed the atmosphere of cold learning which now congealed all the more tender feelings in his breast; but, as we know, this was not Professor von Krug's fate. Now he had instead been blessed with a wife who, besides her *cold*, hard, and selfish character, was without any conception of the value of knowledge, and entirely too ignorant and uncultivated herself to be able to perceive in what her husband's superiority really consisted. In addition, her pride and self-love would not admit that any living being could be more richly endowed than she was herself. She regarded her husband as a dotard, a simpleton, a fool, who lacked all common sense and must be treated like a child.

In the beginning of their married life the Professor had his rooms in common with his wife, and the other suite was then rented; but this Fru Sophie could not endure. She was almost smothered among all that "rubbish," and had her husband's room set to rights and dusted in so unmerciful a manner that the poor man was in despair. Add to this that he never was left in peace, and that his wife in a scarcely delicate way let him know everything which displeased her, and it is easily understood that the peace-loving man would embrace with true joy the proposition to move up into two rooms on the second floor. Once settled in these, the Professor stipulated that no domestic, except his old servant Hans, should be allowed to set foot inside his door, and that his wife should never attempt to put his place in order. This was granted; for her Grace now had the other twelve rooms at her disposal, as well as an unlimited freedom and power to manage these according to her pleasure.

But to return to the Professorskan, whom we left in her husband's outer room.

When Fru Sophie found herself there, it was always with an air of contempt that she looked around her; for the room, with its learned and precious tapestry of immortal works, appeared to her as the worst lumber-room in the world. She now saw her husband standing on the library-steps, occupied in looking for a book. The Professor had not heard her

enter, but continued to think aloud, — a habit which solitude had given him.

"It is a great pity about Bencke, a man of true genius, and yet clinging so stubbornly to his erroneous opinions. H'm, h'm, where is the fifth volume? Ah! here it is. But where can Aristotle's Organon be? Aristotle! strange that no one since his time has been able to produce anything to be compared with — "

"Von Krug," said a sharp and rasping voice behind the Professor, who at this exclamation would have tumbled backwards down the steps if he had not caught hold of the edge of the shelf and let Bencke and Aristotle fall to the floor. The latter protested apparently against being thrown from its high place in this way, and in spite took a leap from the topmost step plump on Fru Sophie's nose, which was not by any means of the same insensible material as the book, but, at this emphatic contact with the greatest philosopher of Greece, began to bleed profusely. The worthy lady herself sank down screaming on a chair, while a whole flood of reproaches and rebukes hailed upon her husband for his exceedingly clumsy behavior in flinging the heavy parchment-covered book right in her face. That such a musty old thing, worthy of being thrown in the fire, should occasion her Grace a swollen nose, was more than she could bear. This day was truly a Tycho-Brahe day for Fru Sophie.

During all this commotion the Professor muttered quite softly to himself, —

"The women, the women, they are only made to torment us men!"

Martha, who in the mean time had come in, now bathed her Grace's nose with cold water, and the Professor went into the inner room with Aristotle's Organon; there he seated himself at his table, and completely forgot his tender half and her maltreated nose. Still she was not one of those who allow people to forget that they exist. Therefore, when the nose had been duly cared for and could be considered somewhat recovered, the Professorskan rose and went into her husband's room to delight him yet further with her presence.

"O yes, you sit down to read quite unfeelingly, as if nothing had happened, after you have nearly been the death of your wife; and this without inquiring a word about my health or how I find myself after that dangerous occurrence. Dear Von Krug, I must tell you that you are more indifferent than one can bear. What would people say if they were to witness your behavior? You are a real trial to the woman who has been unfortunate enough to become your wife."

"My dear, it seems to me that you are perfectly well and hearty," answered the Professor, with a sigh at being disturbed.

"Do you call it well to have a swollen nose?"

"My dear, there is nothing the matter with your nose."

Fru Sophie shrugged her shoulders with a contemptuous expression, which was intended to show the uselessness of disputing further with a fool, and then seated herself on a chair opposite her husband, who, on seeing this, drew a still deeper sigh. He realized that something resembling torture, in a spiritual sense, was in store for him, and that he might not be able to return to his dear Aristotle for a whole hour.

"I suppose you understand that I have something to say to you, as I have ventured into this rubbish hole."

"Ah, yes, just so!" The Professor had leaned back in his chair, and was already far away in his thoughts.

"I come to demand an account from you of the conspiracy you and Albert have entered into against me."

"Albert, Albert," murmured the Professor, and stared before him in the apparent effort to make out who it was that his wife spoke of.

"Our son! Will you be so good as to

listen attentively to what I say!" exclaimed Fru Sophie, impatiently.

"Yes, my dear! Albert! Now I recollect, — a very interesting young man, with no slight knowledge of logic. It gave me pleasure to talk with him. He, like me, rejects Kant's system entirely."

"Will you be so good as to keep still? I will hear nothing about your Kant and such simpletons as you. I have come here to ask you how you can dare to give him an order for money without first informing me of it and asking my consent."

The Professor pushed up his glasses, and looked at his wife with an expression of the greatest astonishment.

"My dear, he needed money for his journey abroad, and it was certainly natural for me to supply him with it. One cannot travel without money."

"But I have never given my permission for that journey."

"Have you not?"

"No, and now you have in your stupidity given him the means to go, against my will. Do you comprehend that you have committed a great blunder; that I have every reason to be provoked when you and the children presume to act on your own responsibility, without even asking my advice? How would it be if such disorder became the rule? I tell you what it is, Von Krug, if you once more act in that way on your own authority, or allow yourself to mix in family affairs, I will immediately set fire to this old nest and burn up all your books. I would like to ask, Am I the children's mother or not?"

"I have every reason to suppose that you are, my dear," uttered the Professor, turning and twisting like a worm in an ant-hill.

"Ah, indeed, you *believe* that I am the mother of your children."

"I have never disputed this statement."

"Statement!" screamed Fru Sophie. "Statement! Do you know, Von Krug, that if I had not so calm a disposition and as much self-control as I actually have, you would certainly irritate me to death? Will you now, once for all, recollect the incontestible fact, that as I am the children's mother, neither you nor they possess the right to take a single step without first learning my opinion? I am the one who is best able to judge what is right or wrong, what ought or ought not to be done. Now it is my will that you call up our son and make him give back the money-order, as well as forbid him to take the intended journey abroad. Have you understood me?"

"My dear wife, such an act would be in direct opposition to the simplest principles of right."

"Principles of right! What do you know about that? When I say that you have acted wrong, then you have nothing else to do but to rectify your mistake."

"But you see, my dear, your manner of reasoning is not fully logical; it —"

"Listen, Von Krug, have you heard my will?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, conform yourself to it! I do not wish Albert to travel this year. My plan is, to take a journey to the Continent next spring in company with the Stormhjelms, who will then, according to what I have heard, travel abroad; and in that case I shall need Albert as an escort. Therefore take back the order you gave him."

"No!" answered the Professor, pretty decidedly. "He has received it, and what is once given cannot be taken back. Let him therefore travel this year for the benefit it will do him; next year for your pleasure and his own! And now, my dear, it would be kind of you to leave me, for I was just engaged in an important analysis when you disturbed me."

"O yes, I am shown the door; but rest assured I will not go until you do as *I* wish. Am I changed into a zero? shall

any one make out orders without first consulting me? Will you be so good as to send for my son immediately? will you take back the order? will you desist from all further interference in money matters? or shall I so persecute you both night and day that you will not have a moment's peace? Will you call Albert here and do as I say? for before that I shall not stir from this place."

It was now all over with the Professor's courage. With fear and trembling he imagined what it would be to have his dear half follow him in that way, never to be allowed to abandon himself to his studies in peace, never to pursue his learned researches undisturbed. The Professor at the thought of this infliction was ready to jump out of the window, and he would assuredly have subjected himself to any misery whatsoever rather than the threatened persecution. He sighed and stammered, —

"Send the young man up!"

At the same moment Martha opened the door and announced, —

"Baron Silfverkrona wishes to see your Grace."

The Professorskan rose hastily and said sharply and decidedly, —

"I count upon being obeyed."

With this she glided out, assuming her stiffest and most imposing bearing in order to receive the Baron; but she did not forget, however, to say to Martha, —

"Tell the Justice that the Professor wishes to speak to him."

While the worthy lady was descending the stairs, the following thoughts occupied her:—

"I hope this will be a warning to the young gentleman not to reckon upon his father when he acts in opposition to his mother's wishes. It will show him that without me his father signifies nothing. This was a measure that I owed myself and my dignity as a mother. Von Krug in future, as I have expressed my will so plainly, will not dare to take a step without first informing himself whether I approve it or not. So at last I have regained the authority of which they thought they could deprive me, and I am now in a position to mark out the path Albert ought to follow in order to arrive at success and reputation."

Fru Sophie, in every respect satisfied with herself, now entered the saloon, where a young man, with an indifferent, unmeaning aspect, sat buried in an easy-chair. He was dressed with care, and the fine aquiline nose, the light mustache, the dazzlingly white teeth, the small hands, and the easy bearing gave to his exterior something aristocratic, which disappeared, however, when he fastened his dull light-blue eyes on the one who addressed him. When the Professorskan came in, he rose immediately and went towards her, as he said in a drawling and lisping voice, —

"Perhaps my coming disturbs your Grace?"

"Not at all, Herr Baron," replied Fru Sophie, over whose cold, sharp face a smile of satisfaction had now spread. This smile gave her features a striking resemblance to a hard frozen field, upon which the sun casts a pale ray, without being able to thaw the rugged and frost-bound earth.

We consider it entirely unnecessary to repeat the conversation of the Baron and Professorskan. The former came to ascertain when the ladies intended to take the journey to Rönby, as he desired to have the pleasure of accompanying them, and would suit his plans entirely to theirs. Of course the Professorskan informed him of her decision to start the following Friday with the Gustaf Wasa for Westerås. On Saturday Major Qvickfelt was to send horses there to meet them.

While the Baron and Professorskan are making their arrangements, we will see what further occurred with the Professor.

Martha had, at her Grace's command, apprised the Justice that the Professor desired to speak to him. Albert, when he received this intelligence, lay outstretched on the sofa, in his dressing-gown and slippers, engaged in reading. He got up, and after he had put on his coat, went in to his father, saying to himself, —

"Let 's see if my mother has not been about and forced my father to meddle in my affairs; but I am no longer a boy, and this she will have to realize in the end, however hard it seems to be for her."

Albert found his father bending over the table, turning the leaves of Aristotle's Organon, and zealously occupied in taking notes from it.

"You have sent for me, father," said Albert.

"Be so good as to sit down; I will have the honor directly," murmured the Professor, without raising his eyes from his work.

Albert seated himself, took a book which lay on the table, and commenced to look through it. A long time elapsed, and it seemed evident that the Professor had entirely forgotten that there was any one in the room but himself. His son waited patiently. A half-hour passed. Finally Albert closed the book, shoved his chair a little, and coughed, but without these sounds seeming to disturb his father in the least.

"Perhaps you have not time to speak to me now, father," said Albert at last, after he had in vain made all possible attempts to attract the latter's attention.

Just then the Professor laid down his pen, pushed up his spectacles, and looked at his son. The sight of the latter's face seemed to recall him to the world of reality, but still he could not quite remember what he had to say to Albert.

"Ah! I see it is you. Was there anything you wished? I think you desired money, or how is it?"

"No, you have sent for me," answered Albert, smiling.

"Have I? I cannot remember it."

"Mother sent word that I was to present myself in your room," resumed Albert, in order to aid his father's memory; for he realized fully that the whole interview with his father was a contrivance of his mother.

"Mother, — ah, yes! perfectly correct, — your mother," stammered the Professor, and made an effort to tear himself from his learned speculations and return to what actually occurred.

"I think that she had some complaint to make about you. Wait a little; now I remember." The Professor rubbed his forehead with a troubled look, for he now recollected clearly his wife's threat. He reflected a moment and then smiled, nodding at Albert, —

"She did not wish to have you keep that order; but I do not see why you should give it back. Have you not received it? Ergo it is yours; and if it is now yours, it would be very illogical if I took from you what rightfully belongs to you. Your mother will never be able to prove logically that she is right in her assertion that you ought not to be allowed to keep what you have once received."

"So mother wishes me to give back the order?"

"Yes, that is about it."

"Well, what has my father decided?"

"Ah, sure enough, how was it now? Wait, let 's see. Yes, she would not leave me in peace, I think. And then she desired that you should travel with her next year. Just so; it was something like that. Very hard not to be let alone; h'm, h'm!"

"But —"

"Yes, I understand; you wish to know what I think in regard to the matter."

"Yes, I desire to know what you think about the order."

"H'm, h'm! we have not come to any decision about that. It seems to me we agreed to travel together, you and I. You see, I intend to go to Berlin, and

after that I wish to make a visit to Arago in Paris. If we go together, the result will be that she will have no one to be angry with, as the especial cause will have disappeared. All that concerns the journey you must attend to. Tell me now, what do you think of the synthetic method?"

Without answering the learned question, Albert first seized his father's hand, pressed it warmly, and said, —

"We are going to travel together, my good father, and I shall certainly learn more in your company than from all the rest of the journey."

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Two days elapsed. Not a word was exchanged between the Professorskan and her son. To her question to her husband, "Did you take back the order?" she received as an answer, —

"My dear, that matter is arranged." After which the tender half added, commandingly, —

"Then give me the order in question; I need money."

The Professor gave it to her. Then she immediately ordered her carriage and drove to Herr Ekström's, to inquire whether her son had drawn any money; but was told that no money had been drawn since she was last there herself.

Quite contented, she returned home to continue her preparations for the Rönby journey.

The next day was Thursday.

Quite early in the morning Fru Sophie was awakened by a carriage which rolled out of the court-yard. She looked at the clock; it was seven.

"Probably the coachman, who is going for hay," thought she, and lay down again; but she could not go to sleep, and the rising hour was once for all fixed at eight. She therefore abandoned herself to the pleasure of calculating how far events would shape themselves according to her desires. She considered what a lustre Baron Silfverkrona's marriage with Albertine would shed upon *her*, and that she would by this means become allied to the Stormhjelms of Åkerby, as Countess Stormhjelm was the Baron's aunt. Whether her daughter would be happy or not never entered her mind; she only thought of how she herself by this connection should become related to the aristocracy itself, and that her daughter would one day be presented at court. All the splendor which wealth and rank bestow shone around her in imagination; and she already felt proud and happy at the future plans which her pride and vanity sketched in bright colors. Then she passed over to her son; but sighed when he stood before her in the simple black coat, instead of the magnificent lifeguard's uniform. How much more to his advantage would he not have presented himself, with his stately figure, if he had been attired in this fine costume, and could have appeared in society with comrades belonging to the flower of the nobility? Now, on the contrary, the Professorskan had the grief of thinking that he was a simple scribe; but yet he was a rich man's son, had a prepossessing appearance, an agreeable manner, and the prospect of a rapid advancement in the career which he had entered upon against her will. He could certainly, if she was allowed to manage the business, become son-in-law to Count Stormhjelm, who had only one son and one daughter. Therefore the journey abroad next year; therefore should Albert accompany her; therefore her decided repugnance to the idea of his going now, especially as she counted upon Albert's coming to Rönby and during their stay there making acquaintance with the noble family, who would probably spend the summer at one of their estates in the neighborhood of Rönby. The Professorskan congratulated herself upon having succeeded in counteracting her son's plans; and

thanked God, who had given her so firm and inflexible a character, as well as such a wise and superior judgment, that she could at once spin the threads for both her son's and daughter's future position in life. How grateful ought they not to be for her zeal! how few children possessed the happiness of having such a mother, — a mother who inculcated sound principles in their souls, who turned their thoughts to a shining aim, and sowed in them the seeds of a noble ambition! Fru Sophie felt a deep admiration for herself. Just at this moment the clock struck eight, and at the last stroke she seized the bell-cord and rang. Martha entered to assist her mistress.

One of the Professorskan's regulations was, that Martha, while she helped her to dress, must never open her mouth or say a word, unless her Grace addressed her. On the present occasion her Grace was so absorbed in her dreams of the future that she dressed herself in silence, and although it was plain to be seen that Martha had something on her mind, the Professorskan gave no heed to it. At length she was dressed; the clock struck three quarters past eight; a quarter of an hour before breakfast. Her Grace seated herself on the sofa and said to Martha, who stood before her, —

"Well, have you packed all the linen that I am to take with me, and seen that Minna has also put in my daughter's?"

"Yes, your Grace, I have attended to it all."

"Good! There on the table you will find two lists of the clothes which the Fröken and I are to have with us. The Fröken's list you give to Minna, mine you take yourself. Send up the housekeeper after breakfast, so that I can give her directions how I wish to have everything arranged for the Professor and the Justice while I am gone."

"Will the Professor and Justice come back while your Grace is away?" Martha ventured to ask, although Fru Sophie considered that the servants were as little entitled to ask questions as the subject is entitled to address such to his king. Her Grace distended her sharp, clear eyes, and looked at Martha with a penetrating expression.

"Come back? What do you say? From whence should they come back?"

"From the foreign journey," answered Martha, somewhat more boldly.

"This my son has given up by my advice." Her Grace rose to go down to the dining-room.

"But, your Grace, the Professor and the Justice went away this morning at seven o'clock, and the Professor left a letter with Minna to be given to your Grace when you woke up."

"Went away, went away!" screamed Fru Sophie, and, forgetting all her dignity, she started out into the corridor and ran to her husband's door. It was closed, and on it was pasted a paper with the words: "Professor A. C. von Krug has gone abroad, and will not return before September."

If the Professorskan had had weak nerves, she would certainly have fainted; but this was not the case. She had already repented the first violent outbreak of her feelings, because Martha had been a witness to it. So, when she stood outside her husband's door, not a sound passed her lips, but she pressed them together harder and harder, in order to keep all her resentment within her own breast. She returned to her room, beckoned to Martha, and said in a short and commanding tone, —

"I knew of that journey. It was with *my* consent that it was taken. Have you understood me?"

"Yes, I will immediately go down to Minna and say that your Grace has asked for the letter which you told the Professor to leave in her charge before his departure."

"That is right, go!" Martha obeyed.

"Ah, this is too much!" exclaimed

the Professorskan. "Cheated by that old fool; cheated by my son. But they shall pay dearly for this."

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Rönby, Major Gustaf Qvickfelt's domain, was not by any means a large estate, but a small place, which yielded barely enough for a family to live comfortably upon it, by using economy.

Rönby had a charming situation in a dale, surrounded by woods and caressed by Mälaren's waves. A beautiful and well-kept little park, a lovely garden, a large yard with luxuriant lindens, and a parterre with a magnificent bed of roses in the centre, constituted the surroundings of the building. The dwelling itself was spacious and handsome, with high, cheerful, and stately rooms, which were furnished with a tasteful simplicity, without all those articles of luxury and the gaudy display with which city people consider it necessary to overload their rooms, so that they rather resemble crammed fancy stores than human abodes.

In the large saloon stood a fine piano, a pair of small sofas covered with green leather, and chairs of hard polished pine with leather seats. A book-case with glass doors, a work-table at one of the windows, and the large round table in the middle of the floor with its green cloth, the windows filled with flowers, and the canaries in their cages, — all gave to this room a stamp of comfort, and the whole arrangement indicated that it was the family sitting-room. Next to the saloon to the left was the bedchamber; to the right was the parlor, and adjoining that, with an entrance to the hall, the Major's private room. The second floor was taken up by the apartments of the sons and daughters, and by the spare rooms.

It was a few days before midsummer. The June sun shone down clear and smiling upon Rönby and into the large saloon, where the members of the family were assembled at breakfast.

The Major was a tall man with a strong resemblance to his sister. The same steel-gray and sharp eyes, but with this difference, that his expressed more intelligence and feeling than the Professorskan's; the same receding form of the head, although the Major's brow was less retreating and did not slope so abruptly above the frontal arch; the same mouth with the thin lips, and the same unbending expression in every feature. Still he had in his character considerable more kindness of heart than had fallen to Fru von Krug's share. Besides, there was another very essential dissimilarity between them. His sister had, even when a child, been proud of her aristocratic origin She made herself a slave to the prejudices of birth, and from self-love she continually spoke of her connections. Her vanity made her strive to associate only with people of high standing, and such as occupied a certain position in society. She paid homage to the already superannuated and mouldering ideas about the privileges of birth, and was in her innermost heart in all her thoughts and feelings an aristocrat, while her brother, on the contrary, was and remained a democrat.

The main trait in his character was self-love and lack of respect for everything old. He was a hater of the nobility, of aristocracy, because he was a quite insignificant member of it, without property, and placed on one of the lowest rounds of the ladder in his caste, instead of being, as his self-love demanded, one of the most distinguished and most considered. As he could not be one of the first, he did not wish to be one of the last, but appeared against the whole class and drew a certain attention to his name by the liberal views he entertained and by defending the rights of the people in the Diet. As a youth, he was in continua

feud with his sister; and as a man, these feuds degenerated into actual strifes, and assumed a character of enmity, when he finally married Pastor Pehrsson's daughter, and, through the inheritance from his wife's grandfather, Peasant Matts Pehrsson, gained an opportunity of purchasing Rönby, which he had before rented, and of paying cash for it. With a brother who had made such a misalliance Fru von Krug did not wish to have any connection, but suspended all further acquaintance, with which the Major declared himself fully satisfied. Besides these points of difference, there were also others between the brother and sister. The Major was a just man, a kind master, a tender father, and in his way was inexpressibly fond of his wife.

For twenty-six years the brother and sister had lived as enemies, when negociations of peace were begun by Baron Silfverkrona. After much stiff-necked opposition on the Major's part, the Baron succeeded in bringing about a reconciliation, so that, when the Professorskan wrote to her brother and said that she intended to visit him in the summer, he had replied that she would be welcome. To be sure this welcome was very cold, but the brother and sister had never been especially tender-hearted towards each other, and for the rest the Professorskan did not go to Rönby for her brother's sake, of this he was fully convinced, but simply to gain the Baron for a son-in-law.

The Major's wife, Malin Pehrsson, was a plump little woman with delicate and mild features, in which, however, the traces of many silent and bitter sufferings could be perceived, although the expression was rather cheerful than sad, and the still fresh lips smiled so kindly at husband and children. But one could read in the seriousness of the eyes that her heartstrings had often enough vibrated within her breast in a painful manner at the side of a *husband* warm-hearted, it is true, but stern, passionate, and unbending, who demanded obedience, even if this obedience cost tears. There was a cautiousness in the Majorskan's * whole behavior, a constant attention to her husband, which plainly showed that her whole life had been an incessant study of all his desires, of the changes in his mood, as well as a continued effort to remove everything which in one way or another could irritate or disturb him. Still there was nothing of slavish fear, of anxious compliance in her demeanor. No, she had a certain confidence in her motions, a shade of decision, which became her age and face indescribably well. One dared not regard her as an unhappy wife, although it was evident that her matrimonial road had not always been strown with roses, but perhaps only too often with thorns. One was not assailed at meeting her with the agonized feeling which the sight of certain married women excites, because in their pale and prematurely wasted features can be read the history of a life of so terrible a nature that it has broken the strength of both body and soul.

The Major was a stern, often a somewhat despotic husband; but he had never been mean and tyrannical. He had given his wife many painful stings, but never any incurable wound; and she could thus in no wise be counted with those we have just named.

Besides the Major and his wife there were three persons in the saloon, — a son of five-and-twenty years who was a Magister † and school-teacher in W——, a daughter of twenty, and a son of seventeen, who was a cadet.

The elder son, Ernst, was small in stature, with a handsome head, a calm and almost melancholy expression in the lines around the mouth, although the lively, almost mischievous eyes and the quick motions seemed to tell another

* The wife of a Major.
† Master of arts.

story. His face was pleasing, although the features were not particularly regular.

Jenny, the daughter, of medium height, and with a form which Venus herself would have envied, had a face which at the first glance was rather ugly than beautiful, because it seemed as if the features did not harmonize. The eyes were light, of an undecided blue-gray color; but the eyebrows were broad, black, and very much arched. The nose was too large and entirely too aquiline, the mouth too small, and the hair too light; but the complexion — the complexion was so fair and so blooming that it resembled a new-blown rose. One realized that such a complexion must indicate life and health; it was fresh, — fresh as the leaves of a flower. It was youth and health which bloomed on these cheeks, and joy beamed from every feature. When people had regarded the young girl for a while, they forgot that the nose was too long, the eyes too light, the eyebrows too broad, and the mouth too small; they forgot all this, and only saw before them the buoyant, youthful form, which did the heart good and enlivened the soul.

The younger brother, the cadet, young Herr Arvid, was the image of his father, tall and slender, with sharply defined features and clear, steel-gray eyes; but these features had obtained from his mother a milder expression, which entirely took away the unbending character that distinguished his father's.

The family, as we said, were at breakfast. While Jenny poured coffee for her father, she said with a mischievous smile, —

"You have done a fine thing, papa, in opening your house to that doctor who is serving as a substitute for Uncle Ström! What do you think our gracious aunt will say to being obliged to lodge under the same roof with her gardener's son?"

The Major looked at his daughter with an expression at once stern and yet kindly, saying, —

"If Sister Sophie has invited herself here, by my honor she must content herself with the same company which I consider fit for myself. What matters it, besides, that young Bergström's father is a gardener? Your mother's father was a peasant, and that, upon my soul and honor, has not hindered either your mother or her father from being good and honest people."

"Papa, papa!" Jenny raised her finger laughingly and threatened her father. "You will have to speak a more aristocratic language, and not show so strong a sympathy for the children of the people, when aunt arrives; otherwise your reconciliation will come to an ignominious end."

"Well, then it may do so and welcome, I will tell you, Ma'mselle Saucebox, for I certainly do not think of conforming myself to Fru sister's ideas."

"Indeed, that is too bad; and I, who thought of getting Cousin Albert for a husband."

"Jenny, do not talk nonsense," exclaimed the Major. "I will not hear of any boy of rank as a son-in-law. You know that I do not tolerate the nobility."

"But your own boys," added the young girl, with a deep bow to her brothers, "are boys of rank."

The Major looked sternly at his daughter, but she smiled so merrily at him that the stern expression vanished. Jenny knew more than well that she was her father's great favorite.

"Dear Jenny, now end your childish talk," joined in the Majorskan; "remember that we shall have Aunt Sophie here before evening, and that the curtains are not yet put up in their rooms."

"The Doctor will be here within an hour," said Magister Ernst Qvickfelt, and looked laughingly at his sister.

"Yes, and Jenny has her head full of curl-papers," added Arvid. "Besides,

dear sister, do not neglect, by any means, to put a bouquet of forget-me-not in the Doctor's room."

"And why, if I may ask? Was that the custom at Carlberg?" Jenny turned up her nose contemptuously.

"Ah, no; but you see, the young man, at the sight of these flowers, cannot help asking, 'Greta, who put this here?' and then she will answer 'Ma'mselle,' and then —"

"You are very silly, cadet as you are."

The Major rose from the table, the Majorskan took her bunch of keys, and Jenny bounded to her father, saying, —

"Admit, now, that in despair at not having any prospect of getting me married, you have invited that young Doctor here. It is not likely that you have done it to please mamma, who does not look any too well contented with having the house full of high-born and plebeian people."

"I have done it in order to do Ström a service; and now say no more, chatterbox, but go and help mamma."

"Herr Major," answered Jenny, after which she sprang out after her mother. Arvid followed her, declaiming, —

> "Soon I shall be twenty-five;
> And, as I am ugly besides,
> I seem likely to stay a ma'mselle."

"No, that joy you will never have, because I am Fröken," exclaimed Jenny, turning round. "Besides, I have made up my mind not to die unmarried."

"Indeed! And if no one will have you? — which is very probable."

"Ah, do not borrow trouble on that account; when leap year comes, I will go out and do the courting."

"Jenny!" cried the mother, who had already reached the second floor.

"Here I am, mamma." With a few light bounds she was up the stairs.

"And I too," exclaimed Arvid, who followed her.

"Dear children, *now we must make* haste, and it will not do for you to keep up your childish fun. Jenny must help me," said the mother.

"And I will help Jenny," said Arvid.

"No, you go down; for otherwise there will be nothing but play."

"Mother, I shall put up the curtains, and it will go like a dance; here with the steps!" Our long-legged cadet set the step-ladder in its place and seized hold of the curtains.

"Bless me, Arvid, my curtains will be utterly ruined," exclaimed the Majorskan, frightened, when her son took the smoothly ironed curtains to go up the steps with them.

"Do I hurt them?"

"You rumple them so that they will not be fit to be seen."

"Mistake, mother."

And with a curtain in each hand he rushed to his mother, took her in his arms, and swung round with her.

Jenny laughed, and the Majorskan said, half smiling, half provoked, —

"Let go of me, Arvid, or I shall become angry!"

"First you must say that I am your best boy."

"No, you are a spoiled child, who only makes trouble," said the Majorskan.

"And ought to have his ears boxed," added his sister, applying a particularly light slap on the future officer's cheek. At this he dropped the Majorskan to turn to his sister; but, light as a bird, she sprang up the steps, and, standing on the topmost, she cried, —

"Give me the curtains!"

"Listen now, children, promise me not to waste the time in play, but wait till the rooms are in order, or I shall be put to shame now when I am to receive my sister-in-law for the first time; and you know full well, that I wish to have everything comfortable and in order when she comes."

"And fine and trim, that is clear as the day," said Jenny. "Rely upon me,

mamma. Arvid will help me with the curtains, and in an hour everything will be in order. You can leave now with perfect calmness; for I see that your thoughts are with Stina and the biscuits, and that you are pondering deeply on that almond cake which is to adorn the supper-table this evening."

"Yes, dear child, it really gives me a pang when I think of the baking, and then we are to have that blessed Doctor to dinner. Let us see, now, if you can attend to things up here, so that I may get rid of thinking any more about the rooms!"

"Be calm, beloved mamma!" said Jenny, and threw a kiss to her mother, who nodded kindly and left the room.

Arvid stood on the lower step and handed his sister hammer and tacks, while they talked together.

"Do you know, Arvid, in my heart it seems to me that it will be dreadfully disagreeable when aunt and Albertine come. Think of them with their aristocratic habits; how simple we shall seem and how haughtily they will look down on us! I experience an actual oppression at the thought of how stiff and intolerable it will become in our pleasant Rönby. Papa will get in a bad humor, and mamma have hard work to suit him. Ah, if those Stockholm people would only have the good sense to stay at home! I suppose you have seen both aunt and Albertine?"

"Yes, at the opera and also two or three times at the Carlberg balls; but I have never spoken to them."

"Have you never been introduced to them, never danced with Albertine?"

"No, my father had expressly forbidden me to approach them; and, besides, I am altogether too proud of my mother to wish to associate with relatives who undervalue her."

"You are perfectly right. But tell me, is Albertine pretty?"

"Yes! she is indeed, but proud and stiff as a statue. She looks particularly haughty."

"O Arvid, how terribly disagreeable it will be! Does she dress elegantly?"

"In silk and satin from top to toe, so that she eclipses all."

"Well, that is a pleasant state of things; and I who have nothing but my black silk dress."

"What matters it? You look as nice in your homespun dress —"

"As Albertine in silk?" interrupted Jenny, laughing. "There, now take the steps away, if you please. Well, do you know anything about that doctor?"

"No, but Ernst has known him since the Upsala times."

"I wonder if he is handsome, if he is pleasant, and if he can sing — *Apropos*, do you know whether Albertine sings?"

"Yes, mercy on us! she sang at a *soirée* last winter, which was given for a benevolent object. She has a splendid voice."

"Well, that only was wanting; a poor creature like me will not dare to sing a single note in her presence. Ah, it will be fearfully tedious!"

"Nonsense! we will have our riding-parties, and if she wishes to play the aristocratic lady we will leave her to herself."

In this way Jenny's work went on, and Arvid assisted her to the best of his ability. It was somewhat strange to see the tall cadet help his sister to put up the curtains, shake the table-cover, and attend to various little matters, all of which was accomplished while they chatted merrily with each other.

The young Doctor had already arrived, and Jenny was just dressing herself for dinner, when the chamber-door opened and the Majorskan entered. Jenny stood in the middle of the floor, and held a blue muslin dress in her hand.

"What are you going to do with that dress, my child?" asked the Majorskan.

"Put it on, dear mamma, in order to

be suitably dressed when our high-born relatives come."

"But it is one of your best dresses?"

"Yes, alas! you are right," sighed Jenny; "but I seem to be forced to wear it for all that, so as not to look too shabby by the side of Albertine, who will be so splendidly dressed. If I received them in a homespun dress, they would perhaps not even greet me." Jenny again sighed.

"But, Jenny, in your place I would by no means dress myself in the best I had, or in the least way strive to compete with Albertine, who is a rich Stockholm girl. I would put on one of my homespun dresses, neat and simple, and by this show myself to be free from all vain ambition to be something different from what I was, — an artless girl, happy and contented, without any envy. My child, in such a competition as that which you are on the point of beginning lie the first seeds of envy, — a feeling which never arises in our breast unless we endeavor to aspire higher than our power permits. Therefore, Jenny, never try to appear to be anything but what you are, and think, I am not rich like Albertine, therefore I cannot compete with her in my attire; and why should I? Does dress give any value? No, if she cannot esteem me in my simple attire, then her respect is worth nothing, and I can do without it. But, my child, I do not wish to force your feelings in the slightest way; so dress yourself as you think best. What I have said only expresses my opinion about the matter." The mother patted her daughter on the cheek.

Jenny threw the dress over one arm, seized her mother's hand, which she raised to her lips, and said, —

"Ah, you sweet mamma, who are always so sensible! I wonder if there is any one else as good as you are!"

"Little flatterer, now dress yourself quickly. I will go down and put on my lilac homespun dress and a fresh cap. Let 's see who is ready first." The Majorskan pressed a kiss upon her daughter's brow and left the room.

For a moment Jenny stood still and reflected; then she ran to the closet with the muslin dress, as she merrily exclaimed, —

"There now, into your place again, my dear holiday blue! It is not granted you to receive city people. No, you must hang there quite properly; and now for my red one!" She came out with a fine-striped red-and-white homespun dress.

"Yes indeed, my dear Jenny, you were a trifle vain, and if you do not wish to deceive yourself, a little envious; you could not at all endure the idea that you would be worse dressed than your cousin. O, O, Jenny, you are actually proud; and you were ashamed because you had to show yourself in homespun goods, which you would by no means have liked to confess that you wove yourself. My friend, you were just on the point of wishing to play 'fröken,' to act a little aristocratic."

The young girl burst into a ringing laugh while she put on the simple, pretty dress; and when she had thrown a final glance in the mirror, she was right well pleased with her costume: the neatly made high-necked dress, which set forth the young girl's form in all its plastic beauty; a smooth white collar turned down round the neck; and a black silk apron, which completed the home effect of her attire. The light hair was arranged with simplicity, but still in such a manner that all its richness was displayed. She nodded merrily to her own image, then tripped out of the room, and took her way through the kitchen into the bedroom where the Majorskan was just putting her cap on.

"You see, mamma, here I am; how do you like my appearance? am I all right now?"

"Yes, indeed, my little Jenny."

"Now tell me, how did you think I would dress myself when you went down?"

"Just as you have; for I knew my own Jenny too well to doubt for a moment how she would act as soon as she herself saw what was right."

"And this, mamma, you always seem to see."

"A very natural thing, my child. I have had a little more experience than you; but you ought never to rely blindly on my judgment, for I might be mistaken. You should always consult your own reason."

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When the Majorskan and Jenny entered the saloon, the Major introduced them to Doctor Bergström. While the gentlemen were taking their appetizer, Jenny whispered to Ernst, —

"What a handsome man he is! I never believed that a doctor could be so."

"And why not?"

"All I have hitherto seen have been ugly; but this one looks as stately as a knight of olden times."

The dinner passed off as usual. The Doctor was an agreeable and cultivated young man, who carried on a conversation with ease. He informed them that they might expect the Professorskan and her daughter directly after dinner, as he had seen their carriage ready in the courtyard of the hotel, when he left W——, and supposed that he could have had at the most a two hours' start of them.

It was soon proven that the Doctor's prediction was very correct, for at five o'clock two carriages drove up. In the first, Baron Silfverkrona's, sat the Professorskan, Albertine, and the Baron; the second, the Major's somewhat old-fashioned cabriolet, was occupied by Minna and Martha.

"What the devil does this mean?" said the Major, who stood on the stoop shielding his eyes from the sun, so that he could see better. "I have got two sisters and two nieces on my hands, as the Baron has taken a couple in his carriage; in the other sits a girl and an old woman."

"Dear Gustaf," whispered the Majorskan, mildly, "do not make any remarks during the first moment's impressions. It must be two lady's-maids who ride in the last carriage."

"O yes! they think of keeping up style here, I perceive; and therefore my cabriolet was not fine enough for them to ride in. I tell you, Malin, that no good will come of this; I already feel the blood boil in my veins."

The carriages now stopped. The Baron jumped out before the servant had time to open the door, and reached his hand to the Professorskan. Arvid had also hastened forward to help his gracious aunt, who thanked him with a condescending air, and, leaning on the Baron's arm, ascended the few steps to the porch. The Major advanced to his sister, and said, —

"Welcome, dear Sophie! But why the deuce did you let me send horses for you when you intended to ride with the Baron? You might have spared me the trouble of sending them twenty-five miles there and back."

The Professorskan's face became fiery red, and she fixed her sharp eyes upon her brother; but before she had time to say a word, the Baron hastened to answer, —

"Herr Major, chance so ordered that I had the pleasure of making the journey in company with the Professorskan on the boat, and then I requested the honor of driving the ladies here in my carriage."

"Very well!" The Major took his wife by the hand, and introduced her to his sister in the following words: "This is my wife, who, in addition to domestic happiness, has given me the soil you now

tread upon, and the estate which constitutes my sole property! She, like you, Sophie, was considerably younger than now when we united our fates; but time has not treated her as unmercifully as it has treated you. The deuce! how old you have become!"

If the Professorskan had flushed the moment before, she grew pale now; but as the Baron stood there, and she knew her brother of old, she made no reply, but turned to her sister-in-law with a few cold, measured, and condescending words. There was an undisguised haughtiness in Fru von Krug's whole behavior towards the Majorskan; but the latter was too wise to allow herself to be wounded by it. She showed her sister-in-law a simple good-will, which, however, did not lack a certain shade of dignity; and in consequence of this, the Professorskan's haughtiness rebounded, without having any effect upon the one she desired to humiliate.

"Your daughter, I suppose," said the Major, pointing to Albertine.

"Yes, my daughter Albertine," answered the Professorskan, with a motion of her hand towards the young girl, who stood there like a queen, attired in a dark silk dress and a broad-brimmed Leghorn hat. Albertine's easy bearing and beautiful face always prepossessed people in her favor. She greeted her uncle gracefully, and the Majorskan with an expression of cordiality, although Fru von Krug had strictly forbidden all signs of respectful humility, because her sister-in-law was "an upstart from the masses."

"Your sons," said the Professorskan, and pointed to Ernst and Arvid. Jenny had involuntarily drawn back behind her father.

"Who is that young girl?" added she, in her lofty way, with a glance at Jenny.

"That is my daughter Jenny; a brave and resolute girl, whom I am truly proud of," said the Major. Fru von Krug extended her hand to Jenny with a motion, as if she had thought that her niece ought to kiss it; but Jenny only took the outstretched hand, courtesied, and pressed it heartily.

"Who are the ladies you have with you?" inquired the Major.

"Our domestics," was the Professorskan's answer, and, turning to the Majorskan, she asked to be conducted to her room.

In the mean time the Major had led the Baron into the saloon, and when Jenny directly afterwards went in, the Baron exclaimed, with an animation rare to him, —

"Fröken Jenny, by all means come to my assistance! The Major is determined to wage war with me, because Fru von Krug has two lady's-maids with her, and positively asserts that I am the cause of his being burdened with them. That is my reward for reconciling brother and sister!"

"That reconciliation is not likely to bring blessing with it, I will tell you, Baron, for I can as little endure those aristocratic airs, as the class which she represents; and if my sister wishes to play the lady of rank, she must do it somewhere else than in my house."

"Papa, papa, do not give the Baron so poor an idea of your hospitality. Aunt is now with us, and —"

"And we are obliged to bring the devil ashore," rejoined the Major, "and it is just for this that the Baron is to blame."

"But he has done it with the best intentions. The Baron has acted in the most chivalrous manner, precisely to your taste, papa, when he reconciled a brother and a sister."

"Tra, la, la, tra, la, la, — but, God be praised! there comes the Doctor, so that I shall get rid of hearing more of this song," said the Major, laughing. "I suppose we shall keep the Baron with us over night? It is not worth while to go home this evening!"

"With the greatest pleasure; it is always hard to leave Rönby, where one thrives so well," answered the Baron.

It really looked as if our Baron had become quite a different person from what he was when we introduced him to the reader at the Professorskan's. The indifferent and dull expression had given place to a glimpse of life and feeling which made his features less apathetic and monotonous.

When the Doctor was presented to the Baron, a slight flush passed over the latter's brow, and a touch of shyness revealed itself in his greeting, but died away as quickly as it had appeared.

The Doctor's bow was cold and hard. Jenny thought involuntarily, —

"Goodness! how small the Baron looks beside the Doctor! What a stately and noble bearing, what a magnificent brow, and such eyes full of intellect and feeling! Before, the Baron looked quite different, but now he appears absolutely insignificant."

A half-hour afterwards the Professorskan entered with a proud bearing, high head, and rustling in black silk from top to toe. Albertine followed her, also clad in an elegant black silk dress, fastened at the throat with a costly brooch. When they came in, Albertine's eyes fell on the Doctor; a rosy hue tinged her cheeks, and a charming smile answered the look which the Doctor fixed upon her. This smile said a thousand times more than the most obliging greeting, for it interpreted the feelings of her heart and the satisfaction she experienced at seeing the one she loved. Neither the Doctor's look nor Albertine's smile escaped the Baron.

The Professorskan now greeted her brother, sister-in-law, and their children according to all conventional rules; then she fastened her eyes upon the elegant young Doctor, and the Major introduced him with a smile full of irony.

"My sister, Professorskan Krug." (The Major always left out that *von* which the Professorskan considered more precious than all else.) "Doctor Bergström!"

The Professorskan's lips pressed together, her eyes shot sharp flashes, and her cheeks took a higher color as the Major pronounced the Doctor's name. The young physician bowed respectfully, but without any creeping humility. The Professorskan responded to his bow with a scarcely perceptible inclination of the head; then she threw an enraged glance at her brother, and, stiffer and straighter than usual, started off into the parlor, where she seated herself majestically on the sofa. In the mean time the Major had presented the Doctor to Albertine, and also looked mockingly at her, in the expectation that she, like her mother, would show the same expression of wounded pride; but the young girl greeted him with a pleasant smile.

"H'm!" thought the Major, "can it be that the girl is not so foolish as the mother? Bah! Bergström is a handsome man, and the girl is a coquette I suppose."

The Majorskan was an amiable hostess, and she summoned her natural faculty, in order to spread some degree of comfort within the little family-circle while they drank coffee, but all her efforts stranded against the Professorskan's stubborn silence and haughty stiffness. The worthy lady seemed to be deeply imbittered by the necessity of breathing the same air with a sister-in-law of such plebeian blood as the Majorskan, and a person sprung so directly from the masses as her gardener's son. One could see that she only succeeded in stifling her resentment by the most violent efforts.

The Majorskan looked at her husband, and perceived from his contracted brow that a storm would soon break forth. In order to prevent all unpleasant scenes, she proposed that they should go out

into the park, and when she rose she said softly to the Baron, —

"Show me the friendship of helping me entertain my sister-in-law."

"My slight ability is at your service, madam," replied the Baron, and hastened forward to the Professorskan, to offer her his arm. Fru von Krug's face cleared somewhat; she answered the Baron politely, and accepted the proffered arm. The young people surrounded Albertine and brought her out with them to the park. The Doctor, of course, accompanied the party. At the garden gate Albertine dropped one of her gloves; the Doctor picked it up and handed it to her. When she received it from his hand, she whispered, —

"To-morrow at eight o'clock, in the park."

The Doctor bowed in silence, and Albertine went past him. Arvid hastened to become Albertine's escort, and the Doctor turned to Jenny.

The Baron and the Professorskan constituted the van-guard. The Majorskan had remained at the house and was to follow them shortly. The Major and Ernst came last.

The Professorskan said to the Baron, —

"I am actually so shocked by my brother's bad manners, that it puts me entirely out of humor. My God, in what company he receives you and me!"

"Your Grace, I think the company is charming," lisped the Baron, and fastened his now dull eyes on Fru von Krug! "The Majorskan is a lovely woman, a truly engaging woman, who makes her house one of the pleasantest in the whole neighborhood." The Baron said all this in the drawling tone which was so usual with him; if at any time he became animated, his utterance was very different.

"But her low birth gives to her presence something so simple. It is very painful to think that such a woman has been brought into my family; and only my friendship and respect for you, Herr Baron, could have induced me to come under this roof, where I had expected, however, that they would have paid more regard to my presence and yours than to — " The Professorskan coughed.

"Than what, your Grace?" asked the Baron, with a stupid look.

"Than to let my gardener's son constitute a member of my society, and introduce him, too, as if he were one of my equals. Had it not been out of respect to you, Herr Baron, I would immediately, after this insult from my brother, have left the room."

"They say that Doctor Bergström will be a skilful and well-informed physician."

"Very possible; and this may be very beneficial to those who are his patients, but still it does not give him any right to appear among people of good family, as if he were one of our equals."

"All persons are equal, say the democrats."

Fru von Krug started as if she had trod on a venomous reptile, and fixed her sharp eyes on the Baron.

"You, Herr Baron, certainly never pay homage to such views?"

"Your Grace, I am a nobleman," was the Baron's answer, which he lisped out with his monotonous and sleepy voice.

At supper the Professorskan manifested an extreme haughtiness towards the Doctor, and no slight share fell to her sister-in-law's lot. But this attempt of hers to bring the Majorskan to a sense of humiliation utterly failed of its effects, for the Majorskan's face expressed the same calm and mild dignity; her manner was just as attentive and obliging as before.

The Doctor, on the other hand, smiled compassionately, and then exchanged an expressive glance with Albertine, which glance seemed to say, —

"Do you see with what contempt your mother treats me?"

The Major resembled a thunder-cloud, which threatened to break every mo-

ment; but, thanks to the Baron's and the Majorskan's efforts, the brother and sister separated without any scene taking place between them.

When the Professorskan and Albertine went up to their rooms, the Majorskan and Jenny remained in the saloon, where they had a few things to attend to. The mother and daughter looked at each other; finally the Majorskan drew a deep sigh, as if to breathe freely once more. Jenny burst into a ringing laugh.

"Is it pleasant, Herr Magister?" * she asked her mother.

"No; it will be a dreadfully disagreeable time, if Sophie does not lay aside a little of her arrogance. I saw, by your father's looks, that a storm was imminent. Do you know, child, I am very sorry that the Doctor should be treated in an offensive and wounding manner in our house; sorry that your father, during this whole time, must be in a state of irritation."

The Majorskan seated herself. Jenny took a place beside her, and said in a merry voice as she kissed her hands, —

"Throw away all annoying thoughts, Malin 'lilla,'" — this was a pet word of Jenny's to her mother. "The Doctor does not seem to be sensitive to my gracious aunt's ungracious manner, or wounded by her arrogance, but found her, instead, highly amusing, when I looked at him. As far as I am concerned, I should think her an apparition from the Middle Ages, — a lady of the castle who is ready to defend her noble honor with spear and lance. Goodness! mamma, how ridiculous Aunt Sophie looked when she pointed to me and asked, 'Who is that young girl?' and when she reached me her hand she resembled the Empress of China, at least as I imagine her."

"You are happy, who can make a jest of everything."

"Would you like me to weep?"

"No, Jenny, I love you just as you are, and always find consolation and encouragement in your merry talk."

"You must promise me not to look so sad. Do you know, mamma, I felt truly proud of you, when you met all Aunt Sophie's haughty words and gestures with your own quiet dignity, and let her feel that you stood too high to be wounded by her sarcasms about birth and ancestry."

"But, Jenny, this was only a seeming calmness. Your poor mamma is not perfect by any means; she felt the stings acutely, although she is too proud to let any one but you know it."

"Ah, you dear good mamma! I ought to kneel before you when you talk so. Ernst is right when he says that your equal does not exist in the world."

"Do I really deserve all this praise, Jenny, when I confess my weakness in feeling hurt by your aunt's behavior?"

"Just because you are so charming a mother, and do not attempt to appear in any other light than that of an amiable woman, who in your full-grown children have your best friends, just for this reason is your power over us so great, our admiration for you so boundless."

The door between the saloon and bedchamber now opened, and the Major's head appeared. His face was stern, his voice harsh, as he said, —

"How long will it please you to sit here and talk, and hinder me from sleeping? It seems to me there has been gabble enough to-day."

The Majorskan rose immediately, kissed her daughter on the brow, and they separated.

The Major had thrown himself down on a sofa in the bedroom, and was beating the floor with the heel of his boot, while he drummed a storm-march on the table.

"It is really edifying to see how I am obeyed here in the house, and yet it

* Young minister.

seems to me that my words are uttered pretty emphatically, and ought to have such an effect that none would dare to amuse themselves by playing with them."

"Dear Gustaf, in what respect have I transgressed your will?" asked the Majorskan, calmly; but in the pale, sad brow one could see that she experienced a painful impression at this presage of a matrimonial storm.

"In what respect?" roared the Major, and now drummed with his knuckles. "Are you trying to joke with me, or what does that impertinent question mean? Just as if you did not know what provokes me. You know it as well as I myself, but it is your pleasure to defy me. Beware, however; my patience may some time give out, and then —"

"I assure you, my dear, that it is always unintentional, and in direct opposition to my own desire, if I at any time act contrary to your wishes."

"Fol-de-rol! it was against your better knowledge, I suppose, that you had three courses at table this afternoon, although I have once for all forbidden it?"

The Majorskan looked at her husband a little bewildered. She had never heard such a prohibition pass his lips. The Major, who observed her astonished look, sprang up from the sofa and exclaimed in a fit of rage, —

"If you had had a particle of discernment, you would have realized how contemptible it was to try to show that haughty piece, my sister, any attention by placing a quantity of food before her. No, you would have had a simple repast, and thereby indicated that you, in spite of all her pride, only regarded her as a near relative. Now, on the contrary, you took the trouble to serve up tarts and meringues, and such cursed stuff, as if for a royal person, and behaved so sweet and accommodating to her, that you stirred up all my gall. Understand, then, once for all, that you became her equal at the same *moment* you became my wife, and for mercy's sake lay aside that cringing manner."

"Cringing! was not that too severe?"

"Silence, and listen to what I say! That parade of food was a species of servility; but as you do not understand how you ought to deport yourself, I will try to make it plain to you! Therefore bear in mind what I command. As long as Sophie is here nothing must come on our table except what we are accustomed to have every day, neither several courses nor better food. Have you understood me?"

"Yes!" The Majorskan went to her husband, laid her hand on his arm, looked mildly and beseechingly up in his face, and said, —

"Do not be angry!" A tear trembled in her eyelashes.

"There, now, whimper! The deuce take it, that you are not able to have one talk to you without immediately crying like a baby. It would be better for you to obey and not do the reverse of what I wish. But I advise you, Malin, not to violate my will again." With this the Major went out to the saloon and slammed the door after him.

The Majorskan sat down on the sofa, leaned her head in her hand, and a few tears trickled through her fingers. But she dried them hastily when she heard her husband return. The Major went to rest without saying a single word to his wife.

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When the Professorskan and Albertine had come up into the former's room, the mother and daughter exchanged a few words which might serve as an antithesis of the conversation between the Majorskan and Jenny.

Albertine approached her mother to bid her good night and retire to her room, situated on the other side of the hall.

"Stay, I have something to say to

you," said the Professorskan, and made a sign to Martha to leave the room.

"I am much displeased with your lack of tact and the little regard you pay to what concerns your rank. Thus, for example, you treat your aunt as if she were of as good origin as we, with a respect which is out of place in a Fröken von Krug towards a Ma'mselle Pehrsson. You seem to forget that you ought to throw a reserved civility into your manner that would banish all familiarity. If you once for all tried to bear my teachings in mind, and take me for an example, you would not continually infringe the rules of propriety. Do you think that there is a shadow of respect for yourself or the class to which you belong, in the way you greeted that fellow, the son of my gardener? If he had been a nobleman of the first rank, your greeting could not have been more courteous, and I beg to be excused from this unbecoming behavior in the future. Do you understand, I will not see you associate upon an equal footing with such people, neither will I hear of any intimacy with that peasant simpleton, your cousin. Is it proper to receive company in a homespun dress, in a costume worse than a chambermaid's? But how could one expect that a daughter of Ma'mselle Pehrsson would have any discrimination? The mother herself was dressed like a housekeeper. Your own reason ought to tell you that those persons can never come upon a familiar footing with us. If you feel tempted to forget this, then remember that I forbid all closer acquaintance than what civility demands during our stay here. Now you can go to your room. Good night!"

Without answering a word to this long speech, Albertine dropped a low courtesy to her mother and kissed the outstretched hand. But there was something icy cold in her motions which made her almost as stiff as a marble statue, *and when* she again raised her bowed head, an expression of indomitable pride rested upon the broad brow and in the deep blue eyes.

The Professorskan had kept her gaze steadily fixed upon her daughter, and when she read in the latter's whole demeanor only pride and coldness, she frowned and said in her sharp and cutting tone, —

"A little more humility and respect when you say good night to your mother."

A bitter smile curled Albertine's lips; she opened them to say something, but made a still deeper courtesy, and then left the room.

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Jenny sat in her chamber engaged in braiding her hair, while she thought, —

"My poor little beloved mamma will now have to put up with papa's bad humor, for I saw by the expression of his face that he would pour out his anger upon her. Very strange creatures these men, who must always have their wives for scapegoats, and yet papa is so extremely attached to mamma. Ah! who could help loving her! Papa knows full well, when he is in his good humor, how much love and gratitude he owes her for all her forbearance. Yes, that he does. To-morrow he will beg her forgiveness, and then — then she will smile so kind and friendly to him. It is scarcely enviable to be married, I think." Jenny let her hands drop, while she continued in thought, —

"But still there is something delightful in compelling a stern and hard man to acknowledge that one is the good genius of his life, as papa calls mamma. Yes, I will marry!" Jenny now began to laugh while she added to herself, —

"But it is by no means certain that I should be an angel; I have perhaps a little of Aunt Sophie in me, and should the Baron become my victim, I might drive him up into the garret, just like

my aunt!" Jenny laughed heartily. "I will tell mamma of that!"

After Jenny had finished her evening toilet, she went to the window, raised her eyes to the clear summer sky, clasped her hands, and breathed a warm prayer for her parents and brothers, ending with these words, —

"O thou mild Father! Teach me so to order my life and love my duties that I may one day resemble my mother!"

Ten minutes later the young girl slept the calm sleep of youth, interwoven with its joyous and golden dreams.

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When Albertine entered her room, she threw herself down on the sofa and pressed her hands hard against her breast, while she murmured with compressed lips, —

"A day, a fearful day, will come, when my heart will no longer be able to hold all the feelings of oppression which it now contains, and then — then terrible words will pass my lips. Can I love this mother who, with an iron hand, has tried to stifle every spark of love in my heart? No, no!" exclaimed she, and sprang up, stamping the floor with her foot. "No, a thousand times no! Has she not tried to poison my heart with her pride? has she not by her tyrannical severity made me false and hypocritical? O God, how unhappy I am!" Albertine hid her face in her hands and wept.

"What is the matter, Albertine?" whispered a mild and friendly voice, and she felt a little hand take one of hers.

"Ah, Minna!" said Albertine, and put her arm around Minna's neck; still weeping, she leaned her head against the young girl's shoulder.

"Do not weep; I have something in my pocket which will bring you comfort," said Minna, and cautiously took out a billet. (When the young girls were alone they always called each other by their first names, but in the Professorskan's presence Minna said "Fröken.")

"From Richard?" Albertine lifted up her head, and a flash of joy shone through her tears. She opened the letter impatiently, and read it with glowing cheeks and a beating heart. When she had finished, she pressed it to her lips, to her heart, and exclaimed jubilantly, —

"What a fool I was to weep! Do I not possess his love? And this she cannot take from me!" She stretched out her hand towards the door, and exclaimed in an almost scornful tone, —

"Until my death shall I love him, and you, my mother, with all your tyranny, cannot prevent it." With these thoughts Albertine went to bed, after she had consulted awhile with Minna as to how she could meet Richard in the park the next day without being observed.

The following morning, when the Majorskan stepped out into the saloon, she found the Major there. He went to his wife, seized both her hands, and said with a faithful look into her eyes, —

"Are you angry with me?"

"What a question, Gustaf! When was I ever angry with you?" The Majorskan smiled at her husband.

The Major seated himself on a chair, and drew his wife down on his knee.

"But admit that you found me more unreasonable last evening than was allowable?"

"Last evening, yes; but to-day I have forgotten all about it."

"All?"

"Except your decidedly expressed will."

"Yes, Malin, I know that you will do as I wish, and not change our way of living for my haughty sister's sake. I become desperate when I remember with what arrogance she treated you, — and her incivility to the Doctor. But wait! I will, by my soul, teach her that she is not worthy to wipe the dust from your feet. Besides, she shall have a little

extra for putting my temper in such a ferment that I forgot myself towards you."

"Do not speak of that matter; it is forgotten, my dear Gustaf!" The Majorskan passed her little hand over her husband's brow.

"And you are not angry?"

"No, Gustaf; look at me; do I look angry?"

The Major put his arm around her waist, and looked at her with an expression which was positively just as warm as when he asked her hand twenty-seven years ago.

"Thanks!" A kiss accompanied this single word, uttered in a tone more expressive than any speech.

"Promise me one thing, Gustaf!"

"And that is?"

"That you will not say a word to your sister, that —"

"That I will put up with her aristocratic airs. No, Malin, I cannot promise that."

"For my sake. You see, my dear, I have also my pride, my vanity; and both these would suffer if you did let your sister see that her intention to wound me succeeded, or if you now, after the reconciliation, again made me a cause of dissension between you. Ah, if you really hold me as dear as you have often said, grant my request. Believe me, when your sister sees my indifference and insensibility to her efforts to humiliate me, she will be forced to change her behavior. The chagrin at her failure will be to her more bitter than all that you can utter. It would always be a triumph for her if you let her perceive that her petty thrusts had left a wound behind them."

"Malin, these thrusts have wounded not only me, but also you. I, who know how sensitive you are, — I see that her words are pin-points which prick continually."

"Maybe that I feel it so; but it does not pain me when I meet your glance and read in it that I am dear to you. Should you, on the contrary, say anything to your sister, I should feel both humiliated and unhappy. Yield, Gustaf, and for once fulfil my desire."

"*For once!* Do I then never yield?"

"Seldom." The Majorskan smiled.

"Well, Malin, let it be as you will. I owe you this concession for the tears I caused you last evening. Not a word will I say to Sophie with reference to you; but all the more in regard to her shameful behavior toward the Doctor, our guest, in case she continues it."

"But —".

"Say no more, Malin; I have granted your wish, ask nothing further of me." The Major kissed his wife and left the room.

When the Major closed the saloon door, the one to the bedroom opened, and Jenny showed her fresh and smiling face, which, notwithstanding the light eyes, the large nose, and the little mouth, looked indescribably pretty.

"May I come in?" asked she.

"Yes, come."

"There seems to have been a storm last night," said the young girl after she had kissed her mother, "and to-day many, many kisses have been bestowed, so that you look like clear sunshine, Malin lilla. Has the old gentleman repented and been converted?"

"Ah, Jenny, papa is very good. How easily one can overlook his excitability and forget it, when he afterwards, as to-day, atones for his fault a thousand fold with his tenderness!"

"But it would certainly be still better if he never became angry."

"Then these moments of loving reconciliation would never occur," said the Majorskan, smiling.

"You are then willing to endure the evil, for the good results."

"Yes, certainly. I should not be much of a woman if papa's anger should leave any unpleasant and bitter feelings

in my breast, after he had tried to atone for it with love."

"But tell me, how do you think that Aunt Sophie would have received the outbreak of his ill-temper, in case she had been his wife? I have thought a good deal of that."

"Dear Jenny, Aunt Sophie is a good and orderly wife for the man she has. All dispositions are not suited to each other."

"I wonder what Uncle Krug would say about her excellence if he was forced to express himself conscientiously."

"Jenny, now you are wicked!"

"Well, what difference does it make between us girls? You can be calm, Malin lilla! When I talk with strangers about my gracious aunt, it will be with all due respect; for you must know that I believe I have a natural proclivity to resemble her, and this I wish to communicate to you. If I perchance should take the Baron for a husband, I intend to make aunt my model. Do not look so astonished at me for that, but I feel a decided calling to tread in her footsteps."

"Madcap!" said the Majorskan, patting her daughter's cheek. "Have you thought of breakfast?"

"Yes, everything is ready; but as it is only seven o'clock, and the breakfast hour is not until nine, I intend to take a little walk. *Apropos*, aunt has requested to have a tray with coffee and bread-and-butter sent up to her room."

"So she will not breakfast with us?"

"No, we are not to have the honor. O, there goes the Baron down into the park, and I am obliged to see him on account of a communication that I have to make the young nobleman, who looks as if he walked in his sleep. Adieu to you, Malin! do not look so surprised! The man shall only receive a little commission for me."

Jenny took her hat and hurried out, as she threw a kiss to her mother.

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While Jenny quite dauntlessly hastened across the court-yard, and slammed the gate after her with great violence, so as to make the Baron turn round and see who it was, Albertine, accompanied by Minna, stole down to the most retired part of the park, and met the Doctor at the gate which led to the woods.

Albertine took his arm, and they left the park, going deeper and deeper into the wood, while Minna followed them at a few steps' distance. Their conversation is not of any especial importance. All conversations between lovers are alike. They begin with love and end with love. While Albertine assured the Doctor of the steadfastness of her feelings, and both made plans for the future, a meeting of quite another nature took place between Jenny and the Baron.

The young girl's manœuvre at the gate had the desired effect. The Baron turned round, and when he caught sight of Jenny, politeness commanded him to stop. We are in duty bound to confess that the Baron at this moment found the demands of politeness slightly disagreeable. He was engaged in a little espionage, of which the Doctor and Albertine were the objects; for he had, to his surprise, seen both take their way down to the park, and that too at seven o'clock in the morning.

"Out so early!" said he.

"Ah, it is not particularly early," answered Jenny; "but perhaps the Baron has interrupted some ramble only to greet me?"

"And if it were so, I have exchanged a less pleasure for a greater."

"You are too polite, Baron, and thereby forget our agreement, according to which we promised each other to be good neighbors and faithful friends, and consequently never to utter any compliments to each other at the expense of truth."

"Have I violated the agreement?"

asked the Baron, in a livelier tone than usual.

"Yes, Baron, you have."

"When?"

"Just now, when you felt compelled to greet me out of politeness, and thus hindered yourself from continuing your walk. I saw in your face that this detention annoyed you. Deny it, if you can."

"I never lie to you, Fröken Jenny; therefore I do not deny it." A little glimpse of soul suddenly appeared in the Baron's face.

"Thanks. Now I like you, Baron. I will in my turn confess that I counted on your stopping and addressing me."

"You have, then, something to tell me?"

"I have a service to ask of you."

"And that is?"

"You must use your influence with my aunt, and by this means induce her to throw more politeness into her manner towards us all; otherwise papa is likely to take fire soon, and then we should have a stormy scene. Will you do us, mamma and me, this service?"

"Can you doubt it, Fröken Jenny? I believed that my friendship for the family was so well known that there could be no question about my compliance with such a request. Nothing that I can do in the matter shall be neglected; but, alas, my influence with Fru von Krug is not particularly great."

"Ah! do not say so; you are the only one who has any power over her."

"How do you know that? You have only seen the Professorskan and me together a few hours?"

"In the first place, you said to papa when you wished to reconcile him and aunt, that you believed yourself to have a certain power over her; and besides, I have myself come to the conclusion that you, with your rank, must inevitably have an imposing effect upon her."

"You say that, Fröken Jenny, just as if you laughed at my rank," lisped the Baron.

"And so I do."

"Do you laugh at nobility and aristocracy?"

"Yes, sometimes."

"And the reason?"

The Baron fanned himself with his handkerchief, and looked extremely weary.

"Would you like to know it?"

"Nothing would give me more pleasure; but can we not seat ourselves here?"

"Not at all. Exercise is good, and you surely cannot mean to assert that you are tired so early in the morning?"

"O no, only it is so oppressively warm. But let me by all means hear what you have against the nobility."

"That it makes one effeminate. You, for example, — a young man with a naturally good intellect, nay, rich mental endowments, — how do you employ your life and your time? In a weak and enervating inactivity. You are wealthy, very wealthy. You have amused yourself until you have become tired of pleasure. Now, after you are satiated with diversion, you pass most of your time here in the country, but how do you live? Why, you spend a part of the day on a sofa, a part in riding to some of the neighbors in order to wear away the interminably long hours, and in the mean time you let your inspector manage your estates and oppress your dependants, while you yourself are gradually enfeebled by *ennui* and lack of occupation."

"That is a dismal picture, upon my honor; but, Fröken Jenny, these faults of mine are not a result of my aristocracy?"

"Yes, entirely. You all maintain a deep-rooted belief in your better origin; and this makes you bring up your children as idlers and good-for-nothings. If

a nobleman has property, as you have, it becomes a habit with him from childhood to have others think and act for him. He considers himself too good and of too noble birth to work. Had you been a plebeian, with no time-honored name, your parents, even if you had been ever so rich, would have given you an education, and inculcated habits which would have made it impossible for you to lead the inactive life you now do. You would then have attended to your estates, taken part in public affairs, visited the agricultural meetings, manifested zeal for all progress, and spread well-being and happiness around you."

The Baron had regarded the young girl with an expression of actual interest while she was speaking.

"But still I might have preferred an easy life."

"Possible, but scarcely probable however, because you would not have been lulled by these enervating habits from childhood. Ah, Herr Baron, if I were a man, I should blush to spend my days as you do, without benefiting my fellow-beings, without living for the fulfilment of a definite aim. I should despise myself for having wasted the treasure Providence had given me; for having, instead of cultivating my mind, allowed it to sink into a dull indifference for everything which ought to interest and stimulate a noble man."

"I have not always been indifferent, however."

"No; I remember a time when you were otherwise, but you threw yourself blindly into the arms of pleasure and lingered there until all its power of enchantment was exhausted, until all interest in life and your fellow-beings had died out in your soul. You returned here completely changed. Now do not be angry with me, but regard what I have said as coming from a true friend."

"Angry with you, Fröken Jenny, — never!"

"And now adieu. I leave you free to stroll around wherever you please; but do not forget that you have a mission to accomplish with my aunt."

"You have intrusted me with this mission, and believe me, it shall not be forgotten; allow me, however, to accompany you from the park. The object of my walk has failed for to-day, and I would gladly listen to your moral reflections awhile longer."

"No, not now. I have an errand to the Forester, Lena's, who is sick."

"May I not go with you?"

"Certainly; you can there see how it looks in a poor man's home! — a sight that you have probably never yet had."

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Dinner was over, and the company were gathered under the large lindens on the lawn, to drink coffee. The Major, Doctor Bergström, and Ernst sat at a little distance from the ladies, and smoked their cigars. Arvid was engaged in recounting to Albertine all the pleasures that one had to expect in the country. The Baron sat by the Majorskan, and told her that his cousin Count Stormhjelm was coming to spend the summer with him. The Professorskan was enthroned at the right of the Majorskan, with a piece of fine knitting-work in her hand, and Jenny listened to the Baron, while, smiling mischievously, she kept her eyes on her work.

The Professorskan had not been visible for the whole forenoon, but showed herself at dinner, dressed with all the elegance that a rich and vain woman can display in her attire. She was in her whole appearance a striking contrast to her sister-in-law, and would have thrown her entirely into the shade, if the eye had not become weary of regarding this hard face and this stiff figure, covered with laces, ribbons, and silk, while it rested with delight on the Majorskan's

simple, tasteful, unostentatious apparel, and mild, intelligent features. When the heart had frozen in the contemplation of the Professorskan, it became warm in the Majorskan's presence.

The Professorskan's bearing was still more haughty and stiff than on the preceding afternoon. She answered quite briefly when any one addressed her, without trying to sustain the conversation. She felt an acute resentment at being obliged to eat at the same table with her gardener's son, and the more she thought of it, the firmer became the conviction in her mind that her brother had invited young Bergström only to humiliate her. But this was something which she by no means felt disposed to endure. She had already resolved to persuade the Baron to accompany Albertine and her to some watering-place, and to tell her brother quite simply that she did not care to stay longer at Rönby if the Doctor was going to remain there. She was just occupied with such thoughts when the Baron said that his cousin intended to spend a part of the summer at Stjernebro, the Baron's country-seat.

"Do you intend to remain in the country all summer, Herr Baron?" the Professorskan deigned to ask.

"Yes, and all winter besides. I have made up my mind not to leave Stjernebro for a whole year."

"But, Herr Baron, you would be bored to death here in the country, without any *fit* associates or *suitable* recreations."

"I do not think so," replied the Baron, carelessly. "I cannot possibly have it more tedious than in Stockholm, where I am ready to die of *ennui*. Everything there seems to me intolerable. Here I have my amiable neighbors and my friends, — two things which I must miss everywhere else."

The Professorskan pressed her lips together, — a usual sign that she was displeased.

"Will not country life become monotonous to you, Baron, in the course of time, as you are accustomed to a more varied existence?" asked the Majorskan.

"Not at all. Here a need awakens in me to seek a mate, like others, — something which I never think of in the city. In the country, beauty and grace exert a far more powerful influence upon the soul than in a large city, where one, finally tired of folly, satiated with pleasure, and weary of life, becomes entirely deadened. Ah, I am ready to die at the thought of how killingly monotonous such a life is!"

"You have then resolved to abandon the unmarried state?" The Professorskan smiled graciously.

"Yes, if I can only fall in love!"

"Ah! at your age that ought not to be difficult. Is there no young lady of family here in the neighborhood?"

"There are a good many young girls here, rich and beautiful besides," said the Majorskan, "but almost all are betrothed."

"Not the Fröknarne Hönshufvud,"* rejoined the Baron. "They are right amiable."

The Majorskan was soon obliged to leave the company; she was sent for on account of some arrangement which demanded her presence.

Jenny moved her chair nearer Albertine and Arvid. Her Grace and the Baron found themselves as good as alone, for they could talk comfortably, without the others hearing what was said, if they only lowered their voices.

"Your Grace has a daughter who eclipses all. Fröken Albertine is, in truth, very beautiful," lisped the Baron, and sighed.

"Ah, yes! she is quite good-looking," replied the flattered mother, "and I hope that I have given her an education which leaves nothing to desire."

"One need only have the happiness to

* The Misses Henshead.

know your Grace, to feel convinced that your daughter must be an uncommon girl," said the Baron, with a sleepy and drawling voice.

The Professorskan smiled graciously at the rich young man.

"The man who is allowed to call Fröken Albertine his wife is to be envied; but I suppose her heart, like that of all young girls, is an impregnable fortress?"

The Baron repressed a yawn.

"Dear Herr Baron, do by all means have a better opinion of me than that I should have educated my daughter as a heroine of romance. I have implanted such principles in her that the man to whom I render my respect, him will she also choose, if I say that it is *my desire.*"

"That is very correct; a mother has more experience and a surer judgment than a young girl. But—from one thing to another — I have a request to make you. I should certainly have several, but at present only dare to present the most insignificant."

"It is granted beforehand." The Professorskan was pure sunshine.

"I entreat you to deign to be a little more gracious to those around you here. I entertain great affection for the Major, and much respect for the Majorskan; and it would give me exceeding pleasure to see a good relation between these friends of mine and a person whom I so deeply admire as your Grace, in whom I —may perhaps one day hope to find some interest for me."

The Baron had spoken as if reciting a lesson, with his eyes half closed, and an utterly spiritless expression.

"As much constraint as I can lay upon my feelings, I will, for your sake. More I cannot promise. An hour ago I was resolved to leave Rönby, so intolerable did I find it; but in order to manifest the friendship I entertain for you, I shall now remain."

The Baron kissed the Professorskan's hand, and lisped his thanks, after which he fell into admiration over her small white hands.

Two carriages drove up into the courtyard. It was Major K—— and his family from Ekenäs. Majorskan K—— had known the Professorskan in her youth, and now came to renew the acquaintance. She had with her three young ladies and two cadets.

Albertine soon became the sun around which the two cadets and Arvid exclusively revolved. The Doctor did not approach the young girl, and the Baron had sunk down in a rustic chair, and was to all appearance completely indifferent to what occurred. It was his noble indifference which charmed the Professorskan, who detested all expression of feeling as something in the highest degree unbecoming. Jenny chatted with her young visitors, and the Doctor was soon engaged in a lively conversation with them.

Richard Bergström could without exaggeration be said to possess manly beauty. There was something fresh, yet serious in his whole being, something of deep feeling and superiority of intellect in union with power and energy. No wonder then, if Jenny and the Fröknarne K—— found his conversation agreeable and his appearance prepossessing.

Albertine responded stiffly and coldly to the young gentlemen's efforts to interest her, and did not dare to give her youthful feelings vent with a single unconstrained motion, for her mother had her sharp eyes steadily fastened upon her; but in the group of girls they laughed and chatted freely, and Richard was not the least animated among them.

Painful feelings, hitherto strange to her, stole into Albertine's heart; she fancied that Richard was in too good spirits, that the Fröknarne K—— were fully as handsome as she was, that Jenny with her sparkling vivacity was indescribably charming, and that she herself must

appear to him almost like a statue in the midst of these joyous and artless young people. That these thoughts did not put her in better accord, or make her more accessible, is a matter of course. Her manner became still colder and her words fewer, while her gaze clung to the merry group, and she watched uneasily to see if *he*, who was all to her, would not with a single glance let her understand that his heart was with her. But not once did he turn his eyes in the direction where she sat; not a single look gave her consolation for all the self-control she had to exercise.

While these painful feelings took possession of Albertine, the Baron rose and approached her.

"It can be said that two suns are shining here in our little social heaven," said he, taking a seat by the young girl.

The youths drew back and turned towards the girls' group.

"I do not understand your meaning, Baron," answered Albertine, without looking at him.

The Professorskan coughed. At the sound of this sharp cough, the significance of which Albertine very well understood, she looked up. Richard did the same, and both directed their gaze to the Professorskan, whose eyes shot a flash at her daughter. At this Albertine colored, and turned to the Baron, who with the greatest indifference in the world continued, —

"You, my Fröken, are the sun of the youths, and the Doctor there is that of the young ladies."

"What then are you, Baron?"

"A beholder! I observe the drama, and this is the least troublesome part."

Just then the young people proposed a walk to the large lawn in the park. The Baron offered Albertine his arm, just as Arvid started forward to be his beautiful cousin's escort. The youth cast a displeased glance at the Baron, and went to offer his service to one of the K—— girls. Jenny, leaning on the Doctor's arm, led the procession. Albertine felt oppressed and indignant when she saw Jenny and Richard before her. Her cousin's plastic form and graceful motions only increased the painful feelings. The Baron appeared to her flat and intolerable, and he was made to feel this through the ungracious way in which she treated him, and the almost snappish answers he received to all that he uttered.

Arrived at the lawn, they played some running games, but not a single time did the Doctor catch Albertine. "If he would only once approach me, or exchange a glance with me, I should become calm," she thought with a troubled heart, and alleged headache as the reason that she could no longer take part in the game. She sat down under a tree.

She had scarcely time to rest herself before the Doctor drew near; the others also took a rest. Richard stopped before Albertine, so that he turned his back to the others, and asked, —

"Do you feel ill, Fröken?" This was uttered in a loud voice.

Albertine looked up; their eyes met. What expression now lay in his glance? We do not know. But Albertine put her hand to her heart, as if to still its beating, and answered in a voice which she endeavored to make calm, —

"*Now* I am better."

"The intense heat has perhaps made you ill." He took her hand and felt her pulse. He had spoken so that all could hear the words which were exchanged; but when he bent down to examine her pulse, he whispered, —

"Albertine, how is it?" The tone, the look, the warm pressure of the hand, all breathed love. She smiled and answered, —

"Thanks; all is again well."

The Doctor raised his head and said, smiling but in a high voice, —

"You are unaccustomed to this vigor-

ous exercise, but as a physician I venture to assert that it is not injurious." With these words he left her.

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A week had elapsed. The Professorskan's and Majorskan's families had been invited to Stjernbro on midsummer-day. They were received by the Baron's aunt, Fröken Silfverkrona, a lady with a mild and pleasant manner, free from all offensive condescension. The old Fröken was in all respects an amiable and engaging woman. She had spent nearly all her life at Stjernbro. There was she born; there had she grown up with her brother and a younger sister; there had she closed her parents' eyes, and as a young girl followed them to the grave; there had she danced at her brother's wedding; there had she watched at her brother's and sister-in-law's death-bed, and there she hoped to be allowed to end her days. Fröken Sigrid Silfverkrona had nothing of the pale, wasted, and sickly appearance which usually characterizes elderly ladies of rank. Nothing about her indicated weak nerves, or an irritable disposition. She was a spruce old lady of fifty-seven, rather fleshy, with a face which time had touched very mercifully, for it showed health and goodness. She was almost blooming, and one saw in the regular features that she had possessed no ordinary beauty in her youth. When she welcomed her visitors, clad in her black silk dress and simple white cap, she was a fine type of a matron, upon whose face the gaze lingers with pleasure.

To the Professorskan's no slight surprise, Fröken Sigrid and her sister-in-law called each other by their first names and were, as it seemed, intimate friends; still this was nothing but a trifle, so much else claimed the worthy lady's attention.

The luxury and magnificence displayed at Stjernbro were actually dazzling. Everything, from the least to the greatest, bore the stamp of profuse wealth. The whole place — park, garden, dwelling-rooms — resembled a fairy castle from the land of fiction. One could see that the rich young nobleman, after becoming weary of pleasure's whirl and the turbulent dissipations of city life, had, in order to divert himself, fitted up the mansion of his ancestors with a splendor which went hand in hand with comfort and good taste. He had lavished unheard-of sums upon the castle, where he had tried to recall former times to life by furnishing four separate rooms on the second floor in the style of the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries.

After walking through this suite with its old-time magnificence, yet so new and bright, one descended to the lower floor, where, on the other hand, everything was modern, and where the luxury of our day dazzled and fascinated the eye.

"I shall die of vexation if any one but Albertine marries the Baron," thought the Professorskan, and imagined herself just created for this abode, which she also intended to make her own when her daughter once became Baroness Silfverkrona. Majestically enthroned on the sofa, she formed one plan after another, in order to be able to reach her aim soon.

The Baron introduced his cousin, Count Stormhjelm, to the Professorskan, and mentioned at the same time that his aunt and uncle had taken a journey abroad, and were not to be expected much before autumn. All the neighbors were invited to Stjernbro, besides, so that the company was quite numerous. What excited the Professorskan's indignation, however, and conflicted terribly with her ideas of aristocratic conventionality, was that Doctor Bergström was also an invited guest, and moved among this assemblage of country and city no-

bility, precisely as if he had been with his equals.

"That fellow's bearing is shameless in the highest degree. He carries his head as high as any count. The impudence of these upstarts is shocking to behold," thought the Professorskan.

With her sharp eyes she also discovered that the Count regarded Albertine with apparent interest. In her rich black silk, and with the dark-red flowers in her hair, the young girl was as handsome as a queen. The mother, proud of her lovely daughter, turned her glance from her to Jenny, who sat in the midst of a circle of young girls, attired in the blue muslin dress already known to the reader. No flower, no ornament, enhanced her charms, and the Professorskan considered her both simple and homely.

Did others think so too?

We do not believe it, for Jenny's joyous and sprightly manner, her graceful movements, all made her appear exceedingly captivating to those who approached her. Albertine, on the contrary, with all her beauty, had something stiff, cold and inaccessible.

After they had drunk coffee, the company were to visit the suite on the second floor, with its antique furniture. The Baron had just made it ready, and it was to all the neighbors an object which had long excited their curiosity.

The first room consisted of a gallery of family portraits. They made their round there. Among these ladies in high coiffures, and gentlemen with powdered hair, all eyes were involuntarily attracted to the portrait of a young girl, taken life-size. Seldom does one behold an image so completely corresponding to all conceptions of ideal beauty.

Almost the whole company had gathered around this lovely portrait, with outbursts of admiration.

Albertine, who found herself among them, turned her head hastily at the sound of a deep sigh behind her. It proceeded from the Doctor's breast, and she came very near uttering a cry of fright when she saw his distorted face. Richard stared at the picture with an expression of acute grief. His lips were pale and trembling, his hands clenched convulsively; it was as if the beautiful image had been to him a Medusa head, at the sight of which all the bitter feelings in his soul were aroused. It was easy to see that it recalled some terrible and agonizing memory.

Albertine would have liked to address him, and ask what it was that so violently agitated him, but she was obliged to keep silent, and swift as a flash the thought passed through her mind, —

"He has loved this woman! Then I am not his first love!"

Ah, ye furies who constantly accompany love, and are called jealousy and doubt, say why should ye drop your gall into this heart's nectar? Is it because the earth does not possess any unmixed felicity, because we are not to find happiness complete and unalloyed except in heaven?

It was now the second time that Albertine felt these dark powers lacerate her heart. All joy was now gone from her, and she was only engrossed with the thought, —

"He has loved her, — this woman has been his first love."

In the midst of the general murmur of voices Count Stormhjelm said, —

"This portrait was not here when I last visited you. Who is it, Silfverkrona? It is an enchanting face!"

All eyes were directed to the Baron, who stood behind the group. He had his gaze fastened upon the picture, and in it lay an expression of melancholy and grief. His face was very pale. At the sound of the Count's voice he passed his hand over his brow and answered in a clear tone, without that drawling and lisping accent of which he usually availed himself when he spoke, —

"It is the portrait of my betrothed, who died four years ago. As one who was to become my wife, she is entitled to a place among the family portraits."

The Doctor had turned his eyes from the picture to the Baron. They exchanged a glance, whose dark, almost malevolent expression, especially from the Doctor's side, was hard to interpret.

"But, Herr Baron, you have forgotten the name under the portrait," said the Professorskan; "and this is an injustice, when all the others in the gallery have it."

"You are right, madam," answered the Baron, who went to the picture and wrote with a pencil on the smooth plate where the name should stand, —

"Baroness Alfhilda Silfverkrona."

"To-morrow Herr Dalin, who renovated the pictures, shall paint this name." The Baron left the group.

"It is astonishing how much the Baroness's portrait resembles the Doctor," said Count Stormhjelm. All eyes now followed this direction, and exclamations were everywhere heard.

"Yes! the portrait is indeed like the Doctor!"

"It is a very striking likeness!"

The Professorskan said not a word, but inquired somewhat later of Fröken Sigrid, —

"Was this lady's family name Silfverkrona?"

Whether Fröken Sigrid heard this question or not, we do not know; but that she left it unanswered we can aver with certainty.

It is unnecessary to relate what further occurred. The only remarkable thing was that the Baron engaged Jenny for the first waltz. It certainly seemed to the Professorskan that this gave evidence of very little tact on the part of the otherwise so excellent Baron; but she said to herself that she ought to overlook such little peculiarities in a person who possessed so immense a fortune.

Jenny, on the other hand, seemed scarcely sensible of the Baron's politeness. She found him this evening more dull and drowsy than ever. The young girl drew up one parallel after another between the Doctor and the Baron, all of which threw the latter into the shade. The Baron's dulness had always irritated her, and in consequence she had waged several small battles with him, which resulted in making him provoked, and at the same time a little more animated. We must even confess that until the Doctor came to Rönby, the Baron had interested Jenny more than any other of his sex. Now, this interest suffered considerably through the incessant comparisons she made between him and the Doctor. As yet, however, all this was not clear to Jenny's mind; she only found the Baron tedious, with his eternal lisping, his apathy, and indifference. His feeble utterances and actions appeared to her intolerable.

Albertine, on her part, suffered from jealousy. She was jealous of the picture, jealous of Jenny, jealous of everything which drew Richard's attention to any other object than herself.

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All the guests had left Stjernbro. The night had already waned, and the dawning light dispelled the half-twilight which lingered for a while over the earth.

In the portrait-gallery at Stjernbro, the Baron and Count Stormhjelm still walked.

"Verily, my dear Fritz, I do not understand you," said the Count. "You have a woman's likeness painted, hang it up among the family portraits, and proclaim aloud that she has been your betrothed; and this although no person has ever heard that you were engaged."

"Erik, leave this subject. I neither can nor will give you an explanation now; in the future perhaps, but at present the wound bleeds too violently."

The Count stopped before his cousin, upon whose usually phlegmatic face an expression of acute anguish now rested.

The Baron continued :—

"Ah ! my friend, the story about her" (he pointed to the portrait) "is one of those sad dramas which are played every day, and which, if we once reflect upon them, could press tears from our eyes. See how beautiful she is, what a halo of innocence and purity encircles this brow, how fresh are these lips, — and yet she died in the bloom of her beauty, still in the spring of life." The Baron put both hands to his eyes, as if to escape the image and his recollections.

The Count walked back and forth in the gallery smoking his cigar. A long silence ensued. The Baron broke it.

"But leave the past ; at the memory of it I again feel the wild grief which almost deprived me of reason."

"*She* then was the one who effected the change which has occurred in you, who has transformed you from a gay and volatile young man into the dull and indifferent being that you have been for some years."

"Hush ! it was my evil conscience."

Again there was a pause. This time the Count spoke first as he seized the Baron's arm, and said, —

"Let us go down into the park. The morning air will do you good, and dispel the dark shadows of the past."

They proceeded to the park.

"Fröken von Krug is really a remarkably beautiful girl, although rather stiff, and perhaps a little silly," began the Count.

"She is very stiff and yet more reserved, but this is a result of her mother's manner of education. What can you expect the girl to be, when she scarcely dares to think, still less speak or act, without first looking at her mother to see what she is allowed to say or do ?"

"Have you fastened your gaze upon this beautiful automaton ?"

"Yes, my gaze, but that is all. It has always been a peculiar interest to me to study this girl, to see, when she has believed herself unobserved, all the rebellious feelings which are imprisoned in her breast flash forth. Yet there was actually a time when I thought of marrying her, in order to free her from the thraldom in which she now lives ; but I very much doubt if this thought will ever be realized. Her mother excites my aversion, and I should enjoy to see her humiliated for once."

"But yet you behave as if you were her most humble servant."

"Yes ! because I have penetrated her design of getting me as a son-in-law ; and perhaps also for another reason."

"What is that ?"

"To hold her in these hopes, and gain her favor, in case I should feel my former interest for the girl revive. Besides, I have a mission to accomplish with this haughty woman."

"So you are not in love with the girl ?"

"In love !" The Baron smiled bitterly. "No, my friend, I neither am nor can become so."

"If I were in love with her, what would you then say ?"

"Only congratulate you ! But it would be all in vain, for — "

"Well, speak out ! Am I not a handsome man," jested the Count, "and have I not ancestry so old that the girl's proud mother, out of sheer respect for them, would bend her haughty head ?"

"The old lady, yes ; but the girl, no. She cares little or nothing about ancestry ; especially as I believe she has already, without her mother's leave, given away her heart. This secret I found out on our way here."

"There, now, in that respect all girls are disobedient ; but these romantic love-dreams usually disappear in time, and the first lover's fate is generally to be abandoned. Besides, you ought to have kept still about that matter, for instead of cooling off my interest you have considerably increased it. Should she show

herself indifferent into the bargain, I can swear that I shall become dead in love with her. For me resistance is only a greater spur, and if I one day fall in love, it will certainly be with a girl who detests me."

"I am perfectly willing that you should try to conquer her. Well, what do you think of Jenny? You have not seen her for many years."

"She is now just the same as she was as a child, — naïve, simple, and engaging, with a wealth of ideas and a clearness of judgment which sometimes actually amazes me."

"How could it be possible for her to be anything else than she is when she has such a mother!"

"Incomprehensible, nevertheless; for she is only a daughter of the people and her grandfather was a peasant." There was something haughty in the tone with which these words were uttered.

"What is there incomprehensible in it? Nothing. Our most remarkable men have come from the people. The children of the people, when they cultivate their understanding, do it with earnestness and power; and in this endeavor also feel the need of ennobling their hearts and aspiring to moral perfection. We, spoiled children of fortune, never think either of cultivating our intellect or our hearts; we waste our lives in paltry pleasures, ready to sacrifice everything and everybody for the gratification of our lower passions. Good night! the sun is now rising, it is time to retire."

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Time advanced; days and weeks elapsed. The Baron was an almost daily guest at Rönby, as was also Count Stjernhjelm. It was very evident that the Count was more and more fascinated by Albertine's beauty. The more plainly he showed her his admiration, the colder and stiffer she became; but this coldness only had the effect of increasing his fancy.

Fröken Sigrid visited Rönby every week, but no sympathy could arise between her and the Professorskan. The latter, however, had thoroughly informed herself about the state of affairs at Stjernbro, and learned that Fröken Sigrid exerted a great influence over her nephew. The Professorskan consequently resolved to show the old lady all possible attention, for the purpose of making her favorably disposed to the proposition of the Baron's union with Albertine; although she realized fully that the Baron by no means entertained any violent love for her daughter. He was, according to the Professorskan's opinion, incapable of any passion. It was therefore from necessity that she tried to gain Fröken Sigrid as an ally. The Professorskan had taken the firm resolution to put through her plan of getting her daughter married to the Baron. She had so dwelt upon this thought that it almost became a fixed idea with her.

It was the end of July. The workbell had rung at six in the morning, when the front door softly opened, and Albertine, accompanied by Minna, hurried lightly down the steps and took their way to the park. Just as they closed the gate, Jenny appeared on the porch. She remained standing, and looked after her cousin with a peculiar expression, — there was something at once provoked and dissatisfied in it.

"What is my Jenny looking at?" asked her mother, coming out.

"At Albertine," answered Jenny. "We have now lived together, she and I, for several weeks, yet we are as great strangers to each other as on the first day of her arrival. All my efforts to approach her have stranded against her coldness, and her manner towards me is so measured and distant that I often feel wounded by it. Do you know, mamma, I sometimes experience feelings in regard to her

which almost resemble envy. She is so beautiful, so elegant in her attire, and so superior to me, that even my brothers forget me. They see and hear only her, I am as if I did not exist; and yet it seems to me as if I was not in all respects her inferior."

"Ah, my daughter, I believe you are now governed by a very ugly feeling, which you quite correctly called envy, and which proceeds from wounded vanity. And I, Jenny, have lived in the conviction that your vanity had an entirely different direction; that you never could feel displeasure at seeing another more beautiful and wealthy than you!"

"I have never experienced it before; I am actually angry at Albertine because she has called forth such a feeling. Ah, I did so wish to like her, and I should surely have succeeded if she had only been towards me as she sometimes is towards you and my brothers. But I feel that there is something strange between us, something which makes it impossible for us to become intimate."

"But this, however, ought not to call up in you any unfriendly feelings towards your cousin; least of all, for the reason that she is more beautiful and more observed than you." The mother stroked Jenny's glowing brow, while she continued: "Remember, Jenny, what I said to you when we expected them here, 'Draw no comparisons between yourself and her, and do not try to compete with Albertine, for you will thereby only excite envy in your own breast.' No comparison can be made between you two. You each possess your advantages, but you are so unlike in every way that a perfect understanding can hardly exist between you. Mark well, Jenny; the mignonette, with its slight outward beauty, diffuses a perfume far stronger and more agreeable than the proud, magnificent rose. Do you think that the mignonette has reason to envy the rose, whose fragrance only fills the air around it, and whose beauty is so evanescent? If chance places at your side one who is superior to you in a moral respect, then look up to this person as to a higher being, and exert yourself to attain the same moral perfection. Is it, on the other hand, some one, who, like Albertine, only stands above you in beauty, then think only that God has not given you this attractive appearance because he did not consider you to possess sufficient strength of soul at once to be a *good* and a *beautiful woman*. Replace, then, with goodness and virtue, what you lack in beauty, and you will in these efforts banish all feelings of envy and aversion to the person who stands higher than you. Reflect upon what I have said, prove whether it is correct. Our own hearts, when we suffer them to speak, are always the surest judges of our actions."

"Ah, mamma, if I could resemble you! You have certainly never had such bitter feelings as I have entertained for Albertine. Have you ever felt envy?"

"What a question, Jenny! I have had, and still have many faults. When young, I often felt what you experience; but you see, child, I had a father who counteracted my faults, as much as he was able, with kindness and love. In order not to grieve him, I tried to stifle all feelings which my better judgment condemned; but still I did not always succeed."

"You certainly have succeeded, Malin lilla," exclaimed Jenny, merrily. "I would just like to know what fault you have. It would surely be very hard to discover one!"

"O no, it would n't," jested the Majorskan. "I am vain, for example."

"That must only be in your own imagination, mamma!"

"No! I am vain, proud, and selfish, — vain, because *I wish to possess children who are good and exemplary;* proud, because *I have reason to feel proud of them;*

selfish, because *I desire to see them prosperous and happy.*"

"Mamma, mamma, these words I shall never forget. You are a very, very dangerous woman, for you do whatever you wish with a poor creature. But there comes my company," added Jenny, smiling, and pointing to a little troup of girls, still belonging to childhood; they crossed the court-yard, and took their way to the right wing of the building.

"And this afternoon when Aunt Sophie, papa, and I go to the christening at Colonel H——'s, you, Albertine, the Doctor, and Arvid can make a little excursion to the waterfall. I shall let Lena put up a little supper which you can take with you."

"How pleasant that will be! Thanks, thanks, beloved Malin!" cried Jenny, kissing and embracing her mother in a transport of delight.

On the lower floor in the right wing was a large and spacious saloon with plastered walls and four windows. In this light, sunny room stood three looms and some spinning-wheels; a work-table was placed before two of the windows, and between the other two was a large table with leaves, filled with writing-materials and books. In this room were assembled twelve young peasant girls.

They were between ten and sixteen years of age. Jenny came in just as they were taking off their things, and greeted them with a friendly nod, after which she apportioned an occupation to each. The youngest were placed at their lessons, the older ones took out their writing-books, and the two oldest — one fifteen, the other sixteen years old — seated themselves at the looms, where two complicated webs were set up. Jenny then placed herself before the third loom, and all were now in full activity; the looms clattered, and the younger girls studied in an undertone.

As Jenny now sat there and attended to her weaving with diligence and rapidity, she seemed to be a living image of industry, youth, and health. After she had woven about half an ell, she rose from the chair and said to one of the girls, who was engaged in writing large and straggling characters in her writing-book, —

"There, Greta, I have started the web for you, and as soon as you have finished your reading and writing, you may try to weave."

Jenny then began her office of teacher; she heard the girls' lessons, instructed them in geography, corrected the writing-books, and explained to the children what they had been studying. Then the little assembly repeated a short prayer, and each and all of the girls went to their work. The little ones sewed, the more advanced spun, and Greta took her place at the Fröken's loom, where a simple, but beautiful damask web was set up.

At this moment the breakfast-bell rang. Jenny nodded to her pupils, smoothed her hair before the glass, and went up to the dining-room.

No one was there but Arvid. He stood by the window and bit his nails, with every sign of a bad humor.

"I am accustomed to say good morning," exclaimed Jenny, giving him a tap on the shoulder.

"I can't very well greet you before I see you," replied the young gentleman in a tone that was almost snappish.

"Ah! indeed, your lordship is out of temper; only say the word, and I will be as silent as the walls. Otherwise I thought of thanking you for that glorious ride we were to take on horseback yesterday afternoon; was it not delightful?" Jenny looked at her brother with a mischievous and tantalizing air.

"Dear Jenny, you are so childish; it was entirely too late, and — "

"You did not by any means wish to resign the pleasure of being your cousin's escort. I forgive your neglect, my dear

boy, I am no longer angry with you." Jenny put her hand up to his lips.

"Infinitely obliged," answered Arvid, and could not keep from smiling. "What have you been doing this morning?" Arvid's eyes had all this time been directed to the park.

"It is Thursday, and you know that I then have my function of teacher to perform. You ought not to have forgotten that so completely. But what are you looking at?"

Arvid colored.

"O, I am trying to see the Doctor, whom I caught sight of a while ago down there in the park, and, singularly enough, it seemed to me that he was not alone."

"I suppose Ernst was with him." The breakfast bell now rang for the second time. At that instant Albertine entered, and directly after her, the Doctor. In a few moments the other members of the family appeared, with the exception of the Professorskan, who was never seen at breakfast.

"Why the deuce, Doctor, do you stroll down to the forester's?" said the Major, in a jesting tone; "can it be that Erik's pretty daughter is the magnet?"

Arvid fastened his gaze upon Albertine, who at the Major's question became crimson. Her high color produced a contrary effect on Arvid's cheeks, and he turned his eyes from his cousin to the Doctor with an expression in them which was anything but friendly.

"I assure you, Major," replied the Doctor, smiling, "that I have not once seen Erik's daughter; but if she is really so pretty, I shall certainly manage to get a glimpse of her."

"And you, my dear girl" (the Major turned to Albertine), "you stroll around early in the morning, just as if you were a hunter."

Jenny looked at Albertine, who answered, —

"I never before spent a long time in *the country;* and it seems to me so glorious to breath the fresh morning air."

"Take Jenny with you; she will show you all the beautiful places around here."

"If I am also allowed to accompany you, I promise that you shall not lose a single spot which is worth seeing," joined in Arvid.

Albertine looked embarrassed, and pretended not to hear what Arvid said, but handed her cup to Jenny, who poured the coffee.

Arvid was out of spirits, for Albertine usually showed herself very friendly towards him. He was allowed to carry her shawl, to be her escort, and enjoyed all the little privileges which she denied the Count as well as all the young gentlemen in the neighborhood.

Breakfast was over, and Jenny returned to her school. Albertine was just on the point of going up to her mother, when the Majorskan beckoned to her.

"Would you like to make an excursion with my children and the Doctor this afternoon, after we go away?" asked the Majorskan.

"With the greatest pleasure, dear aunt."

"But I have another request, which you must not refuse."

"It is impossible for me to refuse anything that you ask."

"Are you sure?"

"Perfectly." Albertine smiled.

"Show yourself a little more accessible to Jenny, a little more friendly and familiar; believe me, she deserves it. Be towards her as you are towards Arvid and me."

"Am I then otherwise towards Jenny?" asked Albertine, somewhat coldly.

"Yes, you are, and I am sorry that it is so."

"Dear aunt, I am to Jenny as she is to me; if there is any coldness between us, it does not proceed from my side."

Albertine courtesied and left the room.

"There was something in her voice which expressed resentment and bitterness," thought the Majorskan; "for what could Albertine envy my Jenny?"

That evening, after they had returned from the little pleasure-trip, Albertine threw herself down on the sofa in her room and hid her face in her hands. Minna stood before her.

"What is it that now pains again, Albertine?" asked she. "You have been in a very strange mood ever since we came here. Has anything bad happened?"

"Minna, if I could only get rid of seeing Jenny, and of being tormented by his friendliness and cordiality towards her! Ah! I feel that every day that I am obliged to witness the interest she awakens in him my heart is more and more filled with bitterness. Why must she step between me and the only being I have loved? Why must she, who has so many sources of joy and happiness in her home, pour gall into the only felicity I possess?" Albertine wept.

"Have you told Richard what torments you?"

"Shall *I* acknowledge that I am jealous? Shall I, who have promised blindly to rely upon him, confess that my heart doubts? No, never! When my lips sometimes open to ask a question, they close hastily, and the words do not pass them. Where is now my patient waiting for the future? Where are now the confidence and the trust I before entertained? Gone; and I feel a desire to hasten events by force, so that I may have an opportunity to fight for my love. What has this whole excursion been? Nothing but a torture, during which he has lavished all possible attention upon Jenny, and abandoned me entirely to Arvid, who in his boyish self-love believes himself able to make some impression upon me. With every fibre in my soul I observed Richard, and at this Arvid prated about my beauty, sighed, and blushed. What remained to me, in order to be revenged, but to respond to his attentions. Perhaps I even stooped so far as to coquet, — I almost believe it myself, — and then — then Richard gave me a look, not of jealousy, but of disapproval, of displeasure, which at once pained and provoked me. O Minna, how unhappy I am, how unhappy in every respect!"

"All the sufferings you have now described, Albertine, are the offsprings of your imagination and a result of your own reserve. Why not speak frankly with Richard, and tell him the cause of your trouble? But your greatest fault is being so incommunicative. We have both from childhood had the habit of saying what we did not think, and through this it has become our second nature to simulate. I do not see why you should be so reserved as that towards the one you love. I am always frank with you, because you are the only one *I* love."

The next morning, quite early, Minna tripped across the court to the right wing where the gentlemen's rooms were situated. Quite cautiously she knocked at the Doctor's door, which was immediately opened. Minna gave him a little folded paper, and then sprang back, but she came near running over a tall youth, who stood in the entry door.

"Good morning, Ma'mselle Minna," said Arvid, in a rather unsteady voice; "is anybody sick, as you have been to the Doctor?"

"No one but me, Herr Arvid," answered Minna, and hurried away.

An hour afterwards the Doctor walked down to the park, and a few minutes later Albertine and Minna were seen taking the same way. They walked through the park to the forester's cottage, where they turned off into a side-path and plunged into the woods. Coming to a little open space, they found Richard awaiting them. Minna threw herself down at the foot of a tree, while Albertine took the Doctor's arm and was led by him to a rustic seat, a little farther off.

They had only uttered a few words; but when Richard found that they were at a sufficient distance from Minna to make it impossible for her to hear them, he said, with a deep earnestness in his voice, —

"My beloved Albertine, I believe that a strange feeling has stolen in between us which should not and must not be found there, and that is *distrust.* You no longer believe in me, and in the dark moments of your doubt you allow yourself to do something which is always unbecoming in a woman, — you allow yourself to coquet."

"Have I coquetted?" stammered Albertine.

"Yes, and your blush tells me that you are fully aware of having done so, although you are too proud to acknowledge it. Perhaps you wish me to tell you the cause of your coquetry and the possible result of it?"

Albertine was silent.

"You are *jealous;* this is the *cause,* and the result may be that the poor inexperienced youth whom you have chosen as the object of your coquetry takes the favor you show him in earnest, and that you by this means awaken feelings in his young warm heart to which you cannot respond. What have you then done? From an ignoble caprice you have created for him a suffering which every high-minded woman would spurn to occasion."

Albertine looked at Richard, and answered almost in a sharp tone, —

"Is it your own conscience which tells you that I have reason to be jealous?"

"If any inner voice told me that you were right in your suppositions, I should not now be at your side. No, *this* has informed me of what I was far from suspecting!" The Doctor handed her a little written scrap upon which stood these words, —

"*Albertine is jealous of Jenny.*"

"What a low estimate you must have of me, when you can believe me capable of speaking to you of love, and yet of rendering to another the homage which is due to you alone! A man who has so acted ought never to receive the love of a good and honorable girl. Contempt, not love, is what he deserves."

"But, Richard, your attention to Jenny, your complete forgetfulness that I existed, all gave me occasion for anxiety."

"My attention to Jenny proceeded from the delight I experienced in her society, and the true respect with which she inspires me. My so-called forgetfulness of you is something which you have enjoined upon me. 'Before the world we are strangers to each other' you once said, and I have obeyed you from necessity, because I did not wish our love to cast a shadow upon you, or call forth any storm prematurely between you and your mother. I flattered myself that what you had seen of me had inspired your respect and confidence. The man whose honor a girl doubts she ought not to love; when she doubts the truth of his assurance, she also doubts his honor."

"You are displeased?"

"Yes, why should I deny it? I feel wounded, perhaps less by your childish jealousy than because you have entertained these doubts instead of frankly disclosing them. You have allowed them to tempt you to a behavior such as you manifested towards Arvid yesterday. You have smiled at me, shown me trust and love, while your heart contained only jealousy and suspicion. What is the love worth which is not accompanied by an unlimited confidence, or which allows itself to be governed by pride to that degree that it even stoops to dissimulation?"

"Richard, you are severe, you are unjust," faltered Albertine, scarcely able to restrain her tears.

"Severe possibly, my beloved Albertine," said the Doctor in a gentle voice, and raised her hand to his lips, "but not unjust. You have shown me a lack of frankness, and this is a fault for which

you must atone. Who shall correct your faults if not your intended mate?" added he, smiling.

"And I promise that you shall nevermore have reason to be displeased with me."

"But can you really keep this promise? do you remember that you have already broken it?"

"Richard, be magnanimous and consider that I possess only you; you are to me in the place of parents, you are the only bright point which life offers me; and if I am afraid, childishly afraid of losing this greatest treasure of my heart, ought you to wonder at it? I will show you, however, that I have courage to be frank. Tell me in what relation you stood to the Baron's deceased betrothed; what was the cause of your emotion when you saw her portrait?"

"Albertine," exclaimed the Doctor in an agitated voice, "she was my only —"

"Your humble servant," said a voice in the distance.

Albertine started up, frightened, and the Doctor too rose hastily. Both turned their eyes in the direction from whence the voice as well as rapid footsteps were heard. Who did they see? Arvid, who came towards them. The youth was pale and his eyes flashed.

"Do not let me disturb you; I shall go directly, but it cannot be denied that the Doctor exposes my cousin rather too much, and that I as a relative consider it highly unbecoming for my sister to serve as the cover for this little intrigue. It is best to inform my father of it all."

Arvid was so excited that he scarcely knew what he said.

"You are undoubtedly too chivalrous, Herr Qvickfelt, to wish to occasion Fröken von Krug any unpleasant scene," said the Doctor; "it would be a mean act, especially towards a relative."

"Be less lofty, or, by God! I will show you, Herr Doctor, that a man like you, who entices honorable girls to improper meetings, has forfeited all right to use such language," exclaimed Arvid, and rushed towards the Doctor.

Albertine, with her proud bearing, stepped between them and said, —

"Arvid, no scenes; this whole affair concerns me alone, and you have absolutely no right to meddle in it."

"Well, you will see," answered Arvid excitedly, with difficulty repressing his tears, and started off.

"I must follow him, and try to prevent any scene," said Albertine, who pressed Richard's hand and hurried away.

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Arvid ran as fast as his long legs could carry him, while a wild strife was going on in his soul. He was enraged at Albertine because she could like the Doctor; enraged at the Doctor who presumed to like Albertine; enraged at himself for not being able to gain her affection. He would have liked to call the world to witness the injustice he suffered. He felt a decided desire to challenge the Doctor, and Heaven knows whether he would not have challenged himself if he had been able.

It is very remarkable that in a youth's first fancy self-love generally constitutes an essential part. If this fancy is responded to, then his self-love is gratified, because a reciprocated fancy indicates that he is no longer a boy; if his attachment is not returned, then he falls into a rage because he is not regarded as *a man*, worthy of love. The poor flame, however, is usually obliged to pay, in one way or another, for the defeat suffered. He cannot possibly forgive her the wound which has been given to his self-love, and in most cases she becomes the object of his boyish persecution.

Our Arvid was by no means an exception to the general rule; and as the feeling which arises in a youth of his age is never particularly deep, it becomes a

natural consequence that the self-love has so much the greater scope, and leads to a low-minded desire for revenge. So was it with Arvid. He wished to be revenged, wished to wound back; and therefore he now hurried forward at full speed, when, just as he was rushing past the forester's cottage, a merry voice cried to him, "Halt!" A human form barred his way.

"Jenny, do not keep me," screamed Arvid, and pushed away his sister rather ungently; but Jenny laid her hand on his arm and burst into a ringing laugh, as she said, —

"Have you seen the Lady of the woods, or what in all the world are you running for? I believe, forsooth, that Herr Cadet is first in retreat. Good gracious, you look as if some one had frightened the wits out of you, my little boy!"

"Leave me alone! I have no time to listen to you." Arvid jerked himself free from his sister; but Jenny was stubborn and linked her arm in his, as she said, still laughing, —

"If it is to set off at a full gallop, we will at least form a pair. My stars, how fine it will look when we come tearing into the yard arm in arm! You will then look, my dear Arvid, as if you had entirely lost the little reason God has given you. There now, let us start; I have already lifted my right foot."

"Jenny, you will kill me with your jests. Let me alone!" And Arvid tried his best to disengage himself from her hold.

"No, my boy, you will not get rid of me until I have learned who has provoked and frightened you. Poor child, you look as if you had just received a drubbing, and were now going home to tell your mother."

"It is a great shame of you to make fun of me when you see that I am troubled." The future warrior was on *the point* of bursting into tears.

"Troubled! no! my brother, you are either angry or much afraid, but no sorrow is to be seen in your face."

"Afraid!" cried Arvid, whose patience was at an end. "Do you think that I am afraid of that 'plaster-prince,' that doctor's apprentice? No! I shall challenge him, I shall tell papa how he behaves, I shall see that he is shown the door; the rascal, the wretch, the infamous fool, the —"

"Take breath, dear Arvid, and do not exhaust the whole supply of your beautiful words at once. That would be a pity, for you ought to keep a few, so that mamma might hear what you learn at Carlberg. So it is the Doctor who frightened you."

"No, it is I who frightened him." Arvid stamped on the ground. "I can understand that you make common cause with Albertine, but you see, I am your brother, and I will not stand it to have you engaged in intrigues; it is my duty to watch over you, therefore I shall inform papa about the whole affair."

"Listen, Arvid. I do not understand a word of what you say; unless you are going to allow yourself to be tempted to do something which mamma would decidely disapprove. You speak of watching over me, — you who cannot govern your own temper, but give it free rein, so that under the influence of your worse feelings you wish to run and tell tales, just as if you still went in jackets and were a foolish child. Do you really think that mamma would be pleased if she should see and hear you, as you have now appeared? No! it would pain her very much. If you have anything to complain of, then go to mamma and talk to her, but calmly and not with such wild looks and unpolished words."

"Ah, dear Jenny, you will not show yourself a bit more reasonable than I am when I tell you that that sweet and beloved Doctor does not care anything for you, not even two farthings; but

that he is in love, madly in love with Albertine, and appoints meetings with her, and much more which cannot be specified here."

Arvid held up. Jenny had become very pale, and breathed quickly as if near suffocating; after a moment she said, —

"And this upsets you so completely that you are determined to occasion a scene, by rushing ahead and telling papa about what does not concern you and would rouse his anger against Albertine, the Doctor, and Aunt Sophie."

"So you knew it before; you were initiated into the affair! Well, that is admirable, — and you wish me to say nothing to papa!"

"Yes, I do, and you shall not say anything; but go with me to mamma. If she says that you ought to speak of what you imagine that you know to papa, then I have no objection; for what she advises is always right. You certainly will not try to dispute her decision, or deny that it is correct?"

"But I may perhaps trouble her," stammered Arvid, who at the thought of his mother became milder disposed.

"Not if you now, as always, ask her advice; but you would, on the contrary, not only trouble her, but also occasion an unpleasant scene, the worst consequences of which would fall upon her, in case you rushed to papa."

Jenny drew her brother with her, and both hastened home.

It is true Albertine and Minna pressed on among the bushes and stones, running as fast as they were able, in order to catch up with Arvid, but they soon realized the fruitlessness of their efforts, especially as nature had provided him with a pair of unusually long legs. Minna's advice, therefore, was that they should slacken their pace and return home quite calmly; that Albertine should turn to Jenny immediately and ask her to avert all unpleasant scenes.

The Doctor had taken an opposite direction, with the intention of intercepting Arvid and trying to bring him to a little sense and reason. He succeeded in part, for when he opened the gate he met Arvid and Jenny, who came from the park. Jenny saluted him and drew her brother with her into the main building, before the Doctor had time even to open his mouth.

"On the whole," thought the Doctor, "it may be as well for the discovery to occur sooner as later; for this rôle of secret lover is hateful to me." With this he went to his room.

In the mean time Jenny and Arvid had gone in to the Majorskan, who was on her way to the kitchen, with a large bunch of keys in her hand.

"Mamma, give me the keys and I will get what is needed for breakfast," said Jenny, trying to smile, although there was an expression of pain in her features; "talk a bit of reason to this youth, who seems to have lost his own."

The Majorskan handed Jenny the keys, and the latter went out. Arvid had thrown himself down in an easy-chair, and leaned his head on his hand.

"What ails you, my boy?" said his mother, passing her hand over his heated brow. "Has anything happened? Is papa angry?"

Arvid seized his mother's hands and kissed them. The mere sound of her voice seemed to calm his feelings.

"Mamma, I am so unhappy," he said.

"Well, tell me your misfortune; at your age, child, it is not likely to be incurable." She smiled at him lovingly.

Arvid kissed his mother's hand once more, as if he felt that he should need all her indulgence with him. Then he related that it had for a long time excited his surprise that Albertine took such early morning walks, and that the Doctor was almost always out walking at the same time. This, together with Albertine's positive refusal to have any

of her cousins accompany her in these walks, had aroused his suspicions, so that to-day he undertook to spy, and accordingly found them at the little opening in the woods in familiar conversation, while the Doctor held Albertine's hand tenderly clasped in his. At this recollection the youth's cheeks again flamed with anger; he spoke with great vehemence, and exhausted himself in bitter denunciations against the Doctor.

"My first intention was to mention all this to papa," said Arvid in conclusion.

The Majorskan sat silent a moment; then she looked at her son and said, —

"If you had been in the Doctor's place and, like him, had met Albertine, had sat at her side and talked with her confidentially, would you then have found it blamable?"

"Mamma, I am Albertine's cousin, and —" stammered Arvid.

"And might through your relationship be entitled to it, you mean. But it was not on account of relationship that you watched her, nor was it from family feeling that you fell into such a rage against the Doctor; finally it was no outburst of justice which prompted you to tell papa about it all. No! it was a mean, a contemptible feeling which on this occasion governed you, my boy."

"You only speak of me, mamma, and say not a word about the guilty parties, — about the Doctor who has disgraced our house, or about Albertine who has forgotten her womanly dignity."

"Arvid, we have no right to judge so severely. Besides, my child, before you presume to judge others, you ought in the first place to analyze the feelings which sway you. If you stand as now, under the influence of wounded self-love, you can be very certain that you will be unjust and hard in your judgment and make yourself guilty of acts which you must repent and deplore in a calmer moment. Therefore, never express yourself about your fellow-beings before you see clearly what motives actuate you. Well, Arvid, do you wish me to tell you what occasioned your anger?"

"You have already said that it was envy," answered Arvid, with a high color and a certain resentful accent in his voice.

"And now your vanity is wounded, because you cannot contradict this, and because your heart acknowledges that I am right. You see, Arvid, I do not wish to hinder you, by any word of authority, from telling papa all of which you consider it your duty to inform him. But I will only enlighten you about the results that might follow such a proceeding, and show you how precipitately you have acted. Albertine and the Doctor may be secretly betrothed, and their meetings there are probably more from imprudence than anything wrong and culpable."

"Albertine betrothed to the son of her mother's gardener; is that possible?"

"As possible as that I, the granddaughter of a peasant, am your father's wife." The Majorskan spoke with a mild and impressive earnestness.

Arvid bent down his somewhat defiantly raised head, and continued, —

"But Aunt Sophie is not one to give her daughter to the Doctor."

"True, and this is probably the reason why the young people do not dare to reveal their love and their promises. Without wishing to defend such a connection, entered into without the parents' knowledge, I only desire to represent the matter in its true light. You see, if you had now, under the influence of your envy, mentioned what you have seen to your father, you would have represented their meeting in a way which would without doubt have irritated him. He in his turn would have forgotten himself towards the Doctor, and then in a fit of anger would have broken out against Aunt Sophie. What

would the result have been, my boy? Why, that you would forever have made it impossible for Albertine to propitiate her mother, and that the Doctor, who had dared to love Fröken von Krug without her mother's consent, would never have succeeded in atoning for his boldness. You would by this means have snatched from them all hope for the future, and called forth a mutual animosity which for Albertine would have been a source of nameless suffering. Now, Arvid, I have shown you the consequences of the step you intended to take in the hope of revenge. What joy can you reap from the tears of others? Reflect upon what I have said, and after you have decided which of us is right, act according to your better conviction; and I know my Arvid's heart too well to doubt what verdict it will give."

Arvid was agitated, but he was yet too much ruled by his wounded self-love to be so magnanimous and give up his revenge. He asked, therefore, —

"But, mother, shall Albertine and the Doctor be allowed to continue their meetings?"

"Leave that matter to your mother, and resolve to act without regard to their movements. Endeavor, my boy,"— the Majorskan patted her son's head tenderly, — "to raise yourself above the promptings of your self-love, and to be magnanimous in thought and deed. — The breakfast-bell is ringing. — Show that you have a manly soul, although still but a youth, and try to govern your feelings." The Majorskan pressed a kiss on his brow.

Arvid's heart had softened; he put his arm around his mother's neck, and whispered with emotion, —

"I should not be worthy to have you for a mother if I did not strive to become a man of heart and honor."

"Thanks!"

Pale, but seemingly calm, Arvid showed himself at breakfast, which went its wonted way. Jenny was the same as ever, jested with her father, teased her brother Ernst, and talked pleasantly with Albertine, who seemed rather more stiff and inaccessible than usual. The Doctor was silent, and looked gloomy; he now and then directed his dark-blue eyes to Arvid, who, when he met them, colored and bit his lip, to express the anger which at the sight of the Doctor boiled within him. The Major's and Majorskan's manner was unchanged.

"He has not said anything," thought Albertine, "and after breakfast I shall talk with him. It will be far less humiliating for me to beg him to be silent than to take Jenny as a mediator. I cannot possibly overcome my dislike to her. It would be too bitter to be obliged to blush before *her*." At this thought Albertine raised her head still more proudly and her eyes flashed.

Breakfast was just over. The Major had already left the saloon, to look after the men who were working on the place, and the Majorskan detained the others in a conversation about various hothouse plants. Finally she rose, and said to the Doctor, with whom she seemed to be especially speaking, —

"Would you not like to go with me and see the greenhouse, Doctor? I could really become offended when I think that you have now been here several weeks, and have not yet visited the most interesting spot in our little Rönby."

"I have nothing to plead in excuse," replied Richard, smiling, "except that I, who have been brought up in greenhouses and gardens, find greater pleasure in roaming around in the open air, for the sake of change. Still, I shall always be happy to accompany you there, Fru Majorskan."

"Will you come with us, girls?" asked the Majorskan, turning to Albertine and Jenny.

"I am obliged to go up to mamma

first, but I will follow you," said Albertine.

The Doctor and the Majorskan started. They talked in the beginning on indifferent subjects, but when they reached the greenhouse, the Majorskan seated herself on a bench, and signed to the Doctor to do the same.

"'I must frankly confess, Doctor, that I have led you here, in order to talk with you undisturbed. Need I say about what?'"

A dark flush covered the Doctor's brow, and with a cold bow, he said, —

"Perhaps, madam, you will explain this *what;* I am not so happy as to be able to guess it."

The Majorskan smiled.

"Forget for a moment that we are strangers to each other, and regard me as a motherly friend; I am fully convinced that we shall then find it easier to understand each other."

The Doctor bowed in silence.

"What I have to say concerns Albertine, and yet I am not properly the one who ought to speak to you on this subject; it should have been her own mother. Still, with the knowledge I have of my sister-in-law's disposition, I believe it best for us all that I take her place and beg of you an explanation of your relation to Albertine, which, allow me to say, now places the young girl in a dubious light. It pains me, Herr Doctor, that this has occurred during her stay in my house. I will, however, defer my judgment until you have explained yourself."

"And this explanation I will render with the greatest willingness before so noble a judge. Three years ago, while I served as assistant physician at the hospital, I was going one evening up Queen's Street to King's Hill. Before me walked a young girl attended by a servant with a lantern. The sidewalks were covered with ice. The young girl slipped and fell, hurting herself so badly that for a *few seconds* she lay senseless. I hastened forward, lifted her up, and carried her into a store near by, intending to send the servant for a carriage, but at that moment a droschka came driving past. By the light of the street-lamp I recognized a college-mate and friend, Notary von Krug. I called to him; he stopped, jumped out, and at the same instant the servant said, —

"'Good God! Herr Notary, the Fröken has had a bad fall!'

"'My sister? What do you mean?' We lifted the young girl into the carriage, and Albert requested me to accompany them home.

"The Professorskan had gone to Skåne to see about an inheritance left by the Professor's aunt.

"In short, for fourteen days, I visited Albertine daily; she was my patient, and after she recovered, I still continued my visits to the house, and during a whole month's time spent all my evenings with the brother and sister. I was young, Albertine beautiful; and it was no wonder then if I forgot that any other distinctions existed between individuals than the different degrees of culture. Shortly before Christmas, the Professorskan returned, but was taken with a violent cold.

"Albertine had gradually initiated me into the secret of her mother's disposition and her all-absorbing pride. I realized that I ought to break off my visits, but I had not the strength to do it, and one evening when I called on Albert, but only found Albertine, a declaration escaped my lips which, I admit it, ought to have been kept forever to myself. We exchanged vows and separated; for I had received an appointment, and was obliged to leave the capital. Since then three years have elapsed. We have corresponded, and the letters have always passed through the hands of Albertine's brother. During these three years I have only stayed in Stockholm a little while at a time, and have seen Albertine

very seldom. In the beginning of April my father became gardener at the Professorskan's, and now the correspondence was succeeded by two meetings a week in the garden. I love Albertine with all my heart, and in order to become worthy of possessing her, I feel myself strong enough to work and exert all my powers to gain a name if it is possible."

"But in the mean time you expose Albertine's honor, and through these secret meetings cast an irremediable shadow upon her reputation. Do you believe that any name, however distinguished and brilliant it may be, can efface the stain which, in consequence of such a course, will cling to her character?"

"But, madam, these meetings have been so innocent that they could not even have offended an angel."

"I am fully convinced of it, and had I not been so, I should not for a moment have taken upon myself the responsibility of playing the part of Albertine's mother. But, however innocent these meetings may be in themselves, do you really think that the forester's family consider them so? Do you think that the people in the village, who already gossip about it, which gossip I yesterday heard repeated by Majorskan K——, although I did not wish to put faith in it, — do you think that they consider your meetings innocent?"

The Doctor said nothing, and bowed his head.

"No! these persons see in them a criminal love, for only such, according to their opinion, need to go in by-ways and resort to secret meetings, especially as you and Albertine are visiting in the same family, and, as people generally suppose, have every allowable opportunity to exchange thoughts and feelings. It is usually taken for granted that secrecy conceals criminality; innocence goes with an open brow, and does not need to avoid the world's eyes."

"But you, madam, to whom I have made a full confession, — you cannot be as blind and as severe as the multitude?"

"Ah! what avails it if I judge you somewhat more mildly? Can my leniency silence the disparaging reports?"

"Alas, no!" sighed the Doctor.

"And besides, Herr Doctor, I acknowledge quite frankly that I disapprove your behavior. It always seems to me culpable for a man who, for one reason or another, sees that his suit can never be sanctioned by the parents of the girl whom he loves, not only to summon all his power to gain her heart, but also to keep up a relation which injures her reputation. He subjects her through this to the bitterest suffering; for certainly a position which forces her to be a disobedient daughter, who opposes her parents in order to defend her love, is trying in the extreme. Criminal is the man who under such circumstances gives her feelings constant nourishment by continually speaking of his own, and through these secret meetings exposes her good name and reputation. His reason ought to tell him that such an attachment cannot fail to be a source of strife and dissension between the mother and daughter."

"Whatever wounds your words may have given my pride, I must admit that you are right, for in many calm moments, when I have listened to the voice of reason, I have said to myself that I was doing wrong. But I loved Albertine too deeply, and what was more, I knew that I was loved so exclusively, so devotedly, that I had not the courage to draw back. Could I who was her all, to whom all her hopes clung, like a coward abandon her, and thus not only crush my own heart, — that would be little, — but also this noble and trustful one which beat for me alone?"

"But if you are an honorable man, you must draw back, however, and not seek to approach Albertine before you can go to her mother and ask for her hand. Tell Albertine that until then

you must break off all connection between you, all meetings, all correspondence, everything which compels her to employ untruth and dissimulation before her mother and others. You are a *man;* as such you possess the strength for both, and can raise yourself by this not only in your own respect, but also in hers."

"I should, by such a course of action, occasion her deep grief. Ah, madam, what you ask transcends a human being's power! Whom do I prejudice by at least writing to Albertine?"

"Her parents, her *mother*, her duty as a daughter. Have you no remembrance of your mother, when you thus set a daughter against hers? Would you yourself have had courage to crush the heart of the one whom you had to thank for life?"

"My mother died while I was quite young; I do not remember her." The Majorskan looked at the Doctor with a mild, sympathizing expression, while she resumed, —

"Well then, imagine for a moment that her spirit speaks through me and begs you not to continue on a path which only passion induces you to tread. Imagine that she says, 'My son, you are on a wrong road; obey the voice of your better nature, and do not lower yourself so far as to sacrifice what honor and conscience demand, for a moment's enjoyment.' Would you be able to answer that what she asked of you exceeded your ability?"

The Doctor seized the Majorskan's hand, and raised it with deep emotion to his lips, saying, —

"Happy the children who have been brought up by you, madam! Ah! had fate given me such a mother, I should surely have been something very different from what I now am. If my mother had talked to me as you have done, with this mild, considerate earnestness, I should have answered her the same as I *now answer you.* For my own part, I am prepared for any sacrifice which honor and conscience dictate; but — "

"No *buts*, for it is you who must show Albertine what duty enjoins upon you both. So proud a nature as hers would rather perish than infringe the right, if you only show her the extent of its claims. Use your power to develop what is good and noble within her, and believe me, she will through this love you more deeply, while, on the contrary, if you continue to act as you now do, and finally cast a shadow upon her honor, she will end in despising both you and herself. We know, you and I, the false and one-sided education she has had. Is it not wrong, then, still more to distort her ideas of right, and thus mislead her nobler instincts? *The love which rests upon mutual weakness* has too insecure a basis to be lasting. If men were less willing slaves to their passions, humanity's moral stand-point would be considerably higher than it is. Now I have said all that my conscience enjoined upon me."

"And you have thereby deeply struck my sense of duty and honor. You have treated me with so much magnanimity, madam, that my place would be at your feet. You had the right to show me from your house, but you have not uttered a word of reproach for my unpardonable conduct in heedlessly exposing one of your near relatives while enjoying your hospitality. The remembrance of this noble consideration is ineffaceably imprinted on my heart, and I shall do all in my power to make myself deserving of it." He again raised the Majorskan's hand to his lips.

"Thanks, Doctor; I am perfectly satisfied with you."

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While the Majorskan and the Doctor were having the above-mentioned conversation, Arvid had shut himself up in his room. Albertine, according to the

order of the day in the country, immediately after breakfast paid a morning visit to her mother, whom she found taken up with the arrangment of her toilet for the afternoon, when they were invited by Count Stormhjelm to join a pleasure-party to a place of historic interest in the vicinity. Jenny walked down to the village with a little basket on her arm, and after spending a half-hour with a blind and sick old woman, she returned home.

In the court-yard she met her father.

"Would you like to ride with me to the new grounds?" asked he.

"No, I thank you, Herr Major, I have more useful things to attend to; but to-morrow it may be that I will accompany you."

"But then I may not wish to have you along," answered the Major, laughing.

"Ah, there is no danger!"

Jenny held her brow to her father for a kiss, and then hurried away. The Major looked after his daughter, and a bright smile glided over his stern face.

Of the useful things Jenny alleged that she had to do, nothing, however, was to be perceived. When she had given the basket to Stina, she seated herself quite at her ease on the front stoop, without any occupation but throwing peas from a measure to a whole flock of doves. Jenny's features had an earnestness rare to them; the joyous expression had disappeared, and she seemed to be reflecting upon something. Suddenly some one was heard approaching. Jenny turned her head and saw Albertine ascending the steps.

"She is very beautiful. What a stately bearing, what exquisite attire!" sighed Jenny, looking down at her homespun dress and muslin apron. "I positively look like her lady's-maid. I am homely, have no bearing, and am simply dressed." Jenny shook her head as if to drive away all such thoughts, and continued her interrupted soliloquy: "Ah, ah, Jenny, I believe that you are again drawing comparisons; you had better refresh your memory with mamma's wise words. Mamma! how rich I am in possessing such a mother! I think, in spite of it all, that if Albertine and I should be compared with each other, I have more reasons to thank God for what has fallen to my lot than Albertine for what has fallen to hers." She rose and went towards her cousin.

"I have sat waiting for you a long time," said Jenny, with her sunny, fresh smile, as she offered Albertine her hand.

"Have you anything to say to me?" asked Albertine, with a somewhat stiff and repellant expression in her face. Behind the proud bearing a certain apprehension could be detected.

"Nothing especial," replied Jenny, who colored at her cousin's cold and measured way of treating her; "I only wished to tell you, Albertine, that I desire exceedingly to find in you a friend."

"Are we then not friends? I cannot remember that anything has occurred between us, on the ground of which we could gain the name of enemies."

Albertine seemed so unapproachable that she deeply wounded Jenny, who again colored; but, after a short pause, and driven by a noble feeling, she resumed, —

"Why, Albertine, do you always maintain this cold and inaccessible manner towards me? What is it which makes you so ill-disposed towards your cousin? If there is anything in my behavior which displeases you, then let me know it, and I will try to change it. Ah, I desire so sincerely that you may feel a little friendship for me, that you may like me as I wish to like you!" Jenny reached Albertine her hand with so cordial an expression that she could no longer resist her; but took it with genuine emotion.

"Forgive me, Jenny! the fault is not yours, but mine exclusively. I have a reserved and strange disposition, which

makes it hard for me to become intimate with any one. But as you offer me your friendship with so much heartiness, this shyness of mine will most assuredly disappear."

"Thank you for the promise!" Jenny pressed her hand warmly. "Be convinced that you possess in me a sincere friend. Have you any desire to call on an old widow-lady with me?" continued Jenny, putting her arm in Albertine's.

"Is it far there?" inquired the latter.

"Do you see that pretty little house at the beginning of the village? The good old lady lives there."

"I suppose we can be back within an hour. Mamma is then going to take a walk."

"Yes, indeed."

The girls went arm in arm across the court-yard, but fate had decided that they should not make any visit to the old lady that day; for the gates opened, and in drove the Baron's little droschka. When Baron Fritz saw the young ladies, he ordered his coachman to stop, and alighted with much prudence from the vehicle.

"It was a happy chance which brought me here just now, so that I may have the opportunity of seeing you ladies," said our Baron, in his usual drawling way.

"And in what does the happiness consist?" asked Jenny, with a no slight shade of ill-humor. "Perhaps in our seeing the Baron helped out of his carriage quite carefully, just like a respectable elderly lady. Good gracious! will you then remain to all eternity such an effeminate and delicate creature?"

"My dear Fröken Albertine, come to my rescue, or I shall have to hear the whole catalogue of my sins," complained the Baron, with a pitiful air. "Consider, Fröken Jenny, I have weak nerves," said he, turning to the latter, who at these words began to laugh.

"You are incurable!" exclaimed she. "What was it that brought you here?"

"I intended to offer you both a place with my aunt in her carriage, for the afternoon's jaunt to D——."

"As far as I am concerned, I hope to be allowed to ride there on horseback with papa and Arvid," answered Jenny, laughing.

"It is too daring in you to ride on horseback," declared the Baron, looking frightened at Jenny. "And besides, to ride to a ball on horseback, — how will it then be with your toilet?"

Jenny shrugged her shoulders, and turned to Albertine with the words, —

"Well, Albertine, what answer do you give?"

"Mamma must decide the matter. If the Baron will please turn to her."

"Albertine!" cried a voice from the front stoop, and on the steps stood the Professorskan, stiff and straight as usual. The Baron and Albertine hastened to her, and after the former had stated his errand, the Professorskan consented that her daughter should ride with Fröken Sigrid.

Jenny, who had not been called, continued her way to the widow's. She went with slow and lagging steps. When she now found herself alone again, it could be seen that some painful recollection troubled her glad soul.

At three o'clock the Baron's two carriages drove up to Rönby.

The ride of which Jenny spoke was one of her usual jests with the Baron, because he always expressed his alarm at her daring.

The Majorskan and the Professorskan rode with Fröken Sigrid; Albertine and Jenny were to take their places in the Baron's other carriage. Just as they were getting in, the first carriage rolled away, and the Baron asked if the Doctor did not wish to take the fourth seat, which was still vacant. Albertine's eyes beamed at the proposal, Jenny blushed, but the Doctor declined, and stepped into the third carriage with the Major

and his sons; after which they drove to D——, where the Count awaited his guests in a dancing-hall hastily constructed for the occasion of canvas and timber, and decorated with flowers and leaves.

At the Doctor's refusal Albertine's brow had clouded, and she leaned back in a corner of the carriage, with every sign of being out of humor, and with the praiseworthy intention of maintaining a stubborn silence.

Jenny, on the other hand, jested and teased the Baron. She was merry and sparkling, but unusually pale.

The company were received with music from the festooned dancing-hall.

All the neighbors were invited to the rural ball. The Count was extremely attentive to the family from Rönby, politeness itself to the Professorskan, and all admiration for Albertine. This put the Professorskan in the most brilliant humor. She put on the airs of a queen, in her light silk dress, and spoke with a certain condescending politeness to those around her. With a sweet satisfaction she saw that the Baron was almost exclusively devoted to Albertine. The first waltz struck up. The Count and Albertine opened the ball. That the Baron waltzed with Jenny, the Professorskan only regarded as a civility towards her. But what provoked her not a little was that Albertine seemed colder and stiffer than ever; that she lacked the bewitching grace in her motions and her dancing, which Jenny, on the contrary, possessed in rich measure; and that she received the Count's eager homage with repulsive coldness. That *he*, the Count, was wholly captivated by his partner was something which any one with open eyes could see. When the waltz was ended, the Professorskan beckoned her daughter aside, and as she took her arm, as if to take a turn in the open air, she said in a short and commanding voice, —

"Your manner to the Count is not at all what it should be; we must not act in that proud way towards those who stand above us in rank; it is highly unbecoming. Recollect that haughtiness is only a means to keep those who are not our equals at a proper distance. It is consequently my will that you show the Count more attention, and that you always remember his high position in society."

Albertine bowed her head in token of consent, but without answering. There was even now in this mute submission a suppressed pride which in no wise escaped the Professorskan. It irritated her, but this was not the moment to give her anger vent, therefore she only added, —

"I count upon being obeyed, — understand!" So saying, she left her.

"And *I* feel an irresistible desire not to obey you," muttered Albertine. Just as she turned around, the Major stood behind her.

"Listen, my girl," said he; "if you wish to do me a favor, you will be a little agreeable towards my young Doctor, and give him the second waltz; for your mother forgets entirely too often what civility to him requires."

"With pleasure, uncle," replied Albertine, "if mamma does not get angry!"

"Why, are you such a little coward that you cannot stand a little scolding from your mother for the sake of the right? Besides, if it comes to the worst, I will take the whole blame upon myself."

The Major beckoned to the Doctor.

"My niece has this second waltz disengaged for you, my friend." With this he left them.

"Shall I dare to avail myself of this favor?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes! Or will you also have the courage to say no now, as at the carriage?"

"But your mother— Still, this waltz will be our farewell."

"Are you going away?"

"I am so happy as to have your promise for the second waltz," said the Count's voice behind them. "It is just striking up."

"No, Herr Count, it was to the Doctor I promised it," answered Albertine, coldly.

"My Fröken, excuse me! It was to me." The Count straightened himself to his full height, and looked at the Doctor with a scarcely friendly expression in his features.

"You are certainly mistaken, Herr Count, for I have the Fröken's promise." The Doctor also looked at the Count with a challenging glance, but, as if suddenly reminding himself that a quarrel would attract notice, he added politely, "Still I regard it as a duty to submit to her verdict. If she says that this waltz belongs to the Count, I will withdraw immediately."

"My daughter will rest during this waltz," exclaimed the Professorskan's sharp voice.

She had seen the Doctor address her daughter, and immediately went to interrupt the conversation, by which means she had become a witness to the controversy about the waltz. The Doctor bowed proudly and drew back. The Count offered the Professorskan his arm to conduct her to her seat, and Albertine bit her lips so violently that a clear drop of blood was seen on their fresh surface. She left the tent and went to the ruins. Her departure was not observed by any one but the Doctor, as they were just on the point of dancing.

The Professorskan was chatting with Fröken Sigrid. After the waltz came a "française." The Professorskan cast a glance at the dancers, but did not discover her daughter. She searched for her, but did not see her in the tent. She became a little calmer, however, when she also discovered that the Baron was *not there.*

"Have you seen my daughter?" she asked of the Major.

"She is at the ruins with the Baron and the K—— girls."

When the "française" was over, the Professorskan and several of the ladies also went to the ruins to take them once more in contemplation. They found the Baron and the K—— girls there, but not Albertine.

"Have you seen my daughter, Baron?" inquired the Professorskan in a sharp tone.

"She is in the tent," was the answer.

The Professorskan went back. There sat Albertine pale and cold, conversing with the Count. The Professorskan took her seat again among the ladies, perfectly calm about her daughter; but if she had had the least idea of what was said between the Count and Albertine, we greatly fear that she would have had a nervous attack from indignation.

"You did not dance the 'francaise'?" said the Count.

"No," was the short answer.

"Dare I ask for the next polka?"

"I do not intend to dance any more this evening."

"Are you indisposed?"

"No, I feel perfectly well."

"You are then displeased?"

"Yes."

"With me?"

"Yes, and I think I have reason to be."

"And this reason is that you were obliged to give up the waltz with the Doctor?" The Count's eyes flashed.

"It is not the loss of the waltz that provoked me, for I know no power that can prevent me from giving him another one, but your manner of asserting that you had the promise of the second waltz when you did not have it."

"And the penalty is that you do not dance?"

"Yes."

"But then you also lose the opportunity of dancing with the Doctor."

"That loss I will make up for in a fortnight at Rönby, when they have the ball there."

Albertine made a motion as if to rise, but the Count asked her to remain sitting.

"It is then the truth that you have a strong sympathy for the Doctor?"

"Call it sympathy if you will, I entertain the deepest respect for him, and that is something of which every one cannot pride himself." With this she left the Count.

"For that respect you shall pay me dearly. If you knew, foolish girl, how much your defiance and your coldness increase my love, and the desire to conquer you, you would take good care not to treat me in this way. Had you given me approbation and encouragement, my feelings for you would perhaps have faded and died. Now they flame up all the more violently every time you show me your ill-will," muttered the Count, and went straight to the Professorskan.

"I am perfectly miserable! Fröken Albertine is angry, and will not dance this evening," said he.

"Will she not?" The Professorskan's eyes sent a flash at her daughter.

"No, I have entreated in vain, but only received a lamentable 'no' in answer. She cannot forgive me for trying to contest the Doctor's right to the second waltz."

"Herr Count, you have certainly misunderstood my daughter. She has too good principles, not to see that you did her an actual service when you freed her from the disagreeable necessity of dancing with that fellow. Give me your arm and I will show you that some misunderstanding has taken place."

"How thankful I shall be if that is so! It would be more than hard for me, if the one for whom the whole entertainment is arranged did not wish to take part in the dance. Ah, my dear madam, procure me this polka!"

"Be calm," said the Professorskan, in an all-commanding tone. It had never happened that Albertine had shown herself rebellious towards her; she had always found in her daughter a slave to her will, and therefore it did not enter the Professorskan's mind to doubt her obedience in the slightest degree. On reaching Albertine, she said, —

"The Count desires to dance this polka with you, and I presume you are not engaged."

The Professorskan bored her eyes into her daughter with so hard and commanding an expression, that Albertine's first involuntary motion was to drop her head; but the next instant she raised it again, and met her mother's glance with a calm and decided expression, as she replied, —

"I think I have told Herr Count that I do not intend to dance again this evening."

"But *I desire* you to dance!"

Her words "I desire" sounded like *I command* from the Professorskan's lips; but Albertine had made up her mind to resist, and finally resolved not to yield a hair's-breadth. Therefore she answered with the same calmness, —

"I feel tired, and I am really sorry not to be able to fulfil your desire."

"You see, madam, that I have fallen irretrievably into disfavor," said the Count. "Fröken Albertine is not to be moved."

"I had hoped, Herr Count," said Albertine, with a high head, "that you would have sufficient respect for *my* refusal not to try to force me, through my mother, to what *I do not wish*."

The Professorskan became very pale, the Count crimson. The latter, however, bowed politely to Albertine, and uttered a courteous apology; after which, he withdrew. But the Professorskan, who could not express what she had in her mind, left her daughter with so hard and terrible an expression in her face that

Albertine felt her heart tremble in her breast. She thought, however, —

"The die is cast; the strife is begun. Perhaps I shall perish in it, but it is just as well! What have I henceforth to live for?"

Had Albertine been a weak girl the tears would have started from her eyes; but she was accustomed to subdue the feelings of her heart, and in this cold face nothing could be read of all that she suffered.

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In order to explain Albertine's state of mind, we must inform the reader that she met the Doctor at the ruins. When he saw her leave the tent, he went out at another side, and thus entered the ruins from an opposite direction, but at the same time as Albertine. It is unnecessary to repeat here what he said concerning his conversation with the Majorskan. We will only give these words of his: —

"Until the moment your aunt spoke with me, as a mother to her son, I had only been governed by my love. Whenever reason and my better feelings tried to raise their voices, they were continually silenced by the attachment which has bound and will eternally bind me to you. But now, my beloved Albertine, now the reality has appeared in all its nakedness, and roused me from the love-intoxication which has led us both too far. I have become clearly aware of our mutual position, and at this have found myself accused by duty and conscience for my heedlessness. What do I desire? One day to step forth before the world and your mother, and request your hand. What means have I chosen? Secret meetings, secret correspondence, secret alliance with the daughter against the mother. Ah, Albertine, your mother has the right to despise me, and yet my first effort ought to have been to gain her esteem. Her refusal to give her daughter to a man who exposes her honor, who has not power enough over his feelings to sacrifice the fleeting joy of the moment for the good name and reputation of the woman whom he loves, would be perfectly just; and the world would approve it. A mother cannot respect a man whose love has not been noble and elevated. But, Albertine! it must not go on in this way. I blush before myself, and, once awakened to the full consciousness of what is my duty, nothing on earth, not even my love for you, shall induce me to deviate from it. My duty is to show your mother that I, although a child of the people, have ennobled myself through a deep feeling for the right, and that I have in all my actions deported myself like a man of honor. I shall not, as hitherto, give her reason to assert that the gardener's son, who has been raised to an equality with her by the strength of his culture, is not also, through uprightness and a sense of honor, able to lift himself above all objections which she can reasonably make against him as her daughter's intended husband. Therefore, Albertine, we must no longer meet as before, no longer correspond; all secret connection between us must cease. We must wait patiently until I gain an independent pecuniary position, and can with an open brow appear before your mother and bravely ask for her daughter's hand. If she refuses, — well, the injustice is then on her side, and I shall as a man struggle for the attainment of my happiness and — *conquer*. How my love will now raise me above my own weakness! What a spur it will be to redouble my efforts when I know that before I can offer you my hand, I must not approach you, not hear the sound of your voice, not read a word of love from your hand! Far or near, this love will dwell within my breast, however, firm as the rock and faithful as death."

Richard ceased, and raised Albertine's

hand to his lips with such an indisputable expression of tenderness that she felt touched; but the bitterness of the moment dictated the words which she faltered, as a few painful tears fell from her eyes, —

"You abandon me?".

"Albertine!" exclaimed the Doctor, and laid her hand on his heart, "by the God in whom I believe, by the temporal and eternal welfare for which I hope, I swear that so long as this heart beats, it shall belong to you, — you alone. But now, my life's good angel, now I must act in such a way that you can give me your respect. No shadow must rest upon our love, it must be pure and strong." He put his arm around her waist, and talked so long and so earnestly, appealed so fervently to her fortitude and sense of duty, that Albertine finally listened to his words and realized their truth. This voice which spoke so impressively to all her nobler feelings, this love so warm and yet so exalted in its self-sacrifice, had for the strong, intrinsically upright woman something more powerful and transporting than even the most eloquent utterance of glowing passion. She wished first to admire, in order afterwards to love with the higher right. All the small-minded feelings of envy and jealousy which for a time had governed her sank back into forgetfulness, and Richard stood forth before her as one of those brave spirits who do not know of any weakness. His voluntary sacrifice struck all that was great in Albertine's soul, which only needed to be touched to be called to life. Her love grew in strength just because she was obliged to bend before Richard as before a superior being.

"Now, my beloved Albertine, farewell! We must part. I see the Baron and the K—— girls approaching."

"And this is our last meeting?"

"Yes, until I can dare to offer you my hand."

Richard's voice was agitated. He became silent. For the first time he pressed a kiss on Albertine's lips.

"Richard, I shall die," faltered Albertine.

"No! beloved, you will live to reward me for the sacrifice I to-day make to honor and conscience."

The next moment he was gone, and Albertine returned to the dancing-hall with slow steps and sorrow in her heart. Still she had seen Richard, as she thought, in his true character, — elevated and noble, with a heart both strong and warm. To be worthy of him she considered that she ought, on her side, to throw away the slavish fear of her mother which she had hitherto entertained, but which she now regarded as a pitiful cowardice unworthy Richard's betrothed.

A distinguished thinker, Dr. Andrew Combe, says, in one of his works on human character, that "the faculties of our soul resemble the tones of an instrument, which sound only when they are struck." A deep truth lies in these words. How many rich treasures slumber in the human heart for the lack of any awakening! So was it with Albertine. The seeds of all that ennobles and elevates an individual existed in her soul, but not one of these seeds had been fostered during childhood, or borne fruit. No tenderness on her mother's part appealed to her respect and affection, but fear had called forth dissimulation, — dissimulation, untruth. The manner in which she was treated dispelled confidence and engendered an indwelling spirit of rebellion, which awakened the desire to disobey in everything where disobedience could be concealed.

To do what was forbidden and then with secret exultation to think that she had now done something which was in direct opposition to her mother's all-powerful will was, alas! a common enjoyment for Albertine as a child. Although

she possessed courage and strength of soul, nay, the capacity for true, noble feelings of affection and self-sacrifice, this capacity had never been brought into exercise, but, on the contrary, pride, selfishness, and envy were the feelings which her mother's perverted education excited in her. That these faults only distinguished Albertine to a certain degree, she had a fine nature alone to thank.

If the Professorskan had started from home in the mildest humor, she returned in a highly indignant state of mind. Not enough that Albertine had wounded the Count, who showed her such marked attention; she had herself heard how she coldly refused his persistent request to dance with her, and that too in spite of all maternal commands. This was something so unheard of, that the Professorskan thought with dismay upon the possibility of her daughter trying to oppose her, precisely like her son; but she possessed — with this she consoled herself — a far more extended power over Albertine as a girl than over Albert as a man. While the Professorskan was reflecting upon this, the carriages drew up at Rönby.

It was six o'clock in the morning; they were tired, and all betook themselves to rest except the Professorskan. She did not belong to those who are deterred by sleep and fatigue from accomplishing what they have determined to do. When she went up the stairs she turned to her daughter and said, —

"I wish to speak to you." Albertine followed her mother to her room.

The Professorskan seated herself on the sofa. Albertine remained standing.

"I desire to know the purpose of your behavior this evening. Perhaps it was your intention to offend me?"

The hard and unyielding expression of the Professorskan's features seemed really formidable.

Albertine's cheeks were as pale as her mother's, her demeanor as unbending, her brow as defiant, as she answered, —

"If any one has been offended this evening, it seems to have been myself."

"You!" The Professorskan rose hastily with a threatening gesture.

"Yes, I! or what name shall I give it, when you almost tried to compel me by force to dance with a man who had affronted me?"

"Silence!" exclaimed the Professorskan, and stretched her hand toward her daughter. "Beware of trying to defend your behavior, forgetting that you speak to your mother! I might then also forget your nineteen years and only treat you like a refractory child."

Albertine pressed her hands against her breast, drew a deep breath, and answered in a suppressed voice, —

"If I forget the respect you have a right to require, it is because you have never treated me like a daughter. I have been a slave, nothing else; but I do not go so far in slavish submission as to encourage a man whom I despise."

The Professorskan's face became terrible; she seized her daughter by the arm, and squeezed it hard between her thin, but powerful fingers. "Are you crazy to dare to talk to me in that way, or do you know me so little as to think that I will tolerate such behavior? Now listen closely to what I say: if you *dare* — understand! *dare* — to deviate from the obedience you owe me, or show disrespect to the persons whom you, according to my will, ought to respect, I shall punish you by separating you from Minna; she, you understand, will have to bear the punishment for your offence. And if you continue in spite of that to defy me, you shall never see your brother again. I will then have you put into a place where you will be separated from him forever. Now go, and do not leave your room until you receive permission from me, unless you wish to force me to give

you a humiliating rebuke before all! Now go!"

Albertine stood motionless; from her heaving bosom it could be seen that a violent strife was going on in the young girl's heart. She opened her mouth to answer, but closed it again and went out without saying a word.

"She was more easily subdued than I thought," muttered the Professorskan, as she opened the door of the outer room, and called Martha.

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Albertine entered her own apartment pale as death; but no tear, no complaint, told of her inner suffering; on the contrary, she nodded with a sad smile to Minna, and seated herself in silence on the sofa.

"How is it, Albertine?" asked Minna, covering her hand with kisses.

"Help me to loosen my dress, I suffocate," stammered Albertine.

"Are you sick?"

"No. Hush! I shall feel better if I only have air."

"For God's sake, Albertine, tell me what has happened?"

"Do not ask me, my poor Minna. My proud reserved heart cannot open itself to you. Ah, I am too miserable to be able to clothe my anguish in words!"

A flood of tears relieved her heavily oppressed breast. After she had given vent to her grief, she put on a dressing-gown and told Minna to go to rest; but as easily could she have prevailed upon death to give back its prey, as induce Minna to turn from her side when she was troubled.

Perhaps Minna was the saving angel who kept Albertine from sinking under her mother's tyranny. It was she who had given nourishment to her more tender feelings, and, in her childish heart, awakened the need of affection. After Albertine became older, Albert, by reading and conversation, had tried to excite her sympathy for great and noble deeds; but, being himself rather of a stern than a mild character, he was not calculated to develop in the young girl's heart the need of kindness and love.

It was quite different with Minna. She was a little orphan child, without relatives or any one to care for her. As a child, Albertine became her protectress. Although they were nearly of the same age, Albertine, at the sight of the stern, almost unmerciful correction which little Minna received on the slightest delinquency, had not been able to resist the desire of trying to protect *her*, who had no protection on earth. If Minna committed any fault, Albertine took it upon herself, and this founded, on Minna's side, an almost unconditional affection for her young mistress. She saw in Albertine her ideal, and everything that the latter did she believed to be right and correct. Minna's affection rested upon gratitude, Albertine's on compassion. But as the education both received lacked a moral and religious basis, their ideas of right and wrong were entirely perverted: to steal to a forbidden play was regarded by the little girls as right; but to forget to kiss the Professorskan's hand, to pick up her handkerchief if she dropped it, or to open the door for her on the instant, — all these they believed to be unpardonable offences.

Let us return to the above-mentioned morning. Instead of retiring, as Albertine told her, Minna seated herself on a bench and fastened her eyes on Albertine with the same sad and yet affectionate expression with which the dog regards his master when he does not dare to approach him.

Albertine had taken her place at a table and seemed to prepare herself to write. She remained still a long time, with her head leaning on her hand, while the tears fell slowly one after another down on the paper. At last she wrote:—

"RICHARD: Although you said we must give up all correspondence, all meetings, you find me now engaged in writing to you. Since we parted, I have suffered much, and sustained a hard, a bitter contest; and yet only a few hours have elapsed since then. It seems to me as if I had become several years older; as if life, humanity, and my own nature now appeared to me in quite a different light than before. It seems to me as if our last conversation had awakened in my soul new and hitherto slumbering thoughts and feelings; as if it had at once given me a clear idea of what I ought to be, of what I have been, and of what I am. You have opened a new world to my soul's gaze, allowed me to behold a new existence; but I feel strange and alone in this world, to whose threshold you have led me. Am I really the same now as before this conversation? No! my soul has in a few seconds been ripened and developed. It has stepped out of the narrow confines which held its nobler powers captive. I am a stranger to myself. I resemble a person whose eyes have always been fixed upon the earth, but have suddenly, by some invisible power, been directed to the heavens, and then, dazzled by the light which met them, could no longer look back at the low, dark earth. You have shown me life's high duties, you have to my amazed view unfolded a beautiful picture; but this picture was not a romantic painting, too glorious to be fully realized by us weak mortals. No! you have proven through your course of action that we ought to sacrifice the enjoyment of the moment to our duty, to our honor, to our conscience, and that the happiness we purchase at the cost of these will one day be changed into a curse. Richard, I kneel before this moral greatness, at the same time that it crushes my heart and occasions me the deepest agony. While I writhe in the torture of my despair, I desire to kiss your hands, gratefully for your awakening in me these thoughts of a higher and nobler aspiration.

"Richard! you are the only one who could in this way touch the nobler instincts of my soul, because you were the only one whom I loved, — loved with all the ardor of passion, with the jealous fear of losing you. You constituted my whole world, my future and my present. Still this love had its origin in an indwelling desire of opposition, for I knew that such a feeling was a declaration of war against my mother's despotism. A feeling of revenge against the oppression which had imbittered my life was the basis of this love. Then I was transported by your mental superiority; you ruled me with your reason. I was a girl who must of necessity deeply love the man who taught me to feel my own insignificance. I had from my mother only learned to entertain respect for two things, — *rank and wealth*. My brother taught me to revere genius, culture, and knowledge. As I grew up, my spirit of opposition made me averse to everything which awakened my mother's sympathy; therefore I despised what she admired, and whatever lowered humanity in her eyes, raised it in mine. Until yesterday I have bowed only before the power of genius. Before this I humbled my proud heart, and the man I could love had to clear his way by his mental force. You were such a man, and therefore I loved you. That moral superiority was something still higher, no one had taught me. No; often when you made objections to our love, and represented to me that it was a crime against my duty as a daughter, it seemed to me as if you were weak and vacillating in character, and I sometimes showed a submission which was foreign to my heart, and dissembled only to calm your childish anxiety, as I called it. I wished at such moments that you had tried to surmount the obstacles by force, and had openly defied my mother; that you had bidden me break with her

and abandon myself to you. This, according to my convictions, would have been a proof of strength in you. That I had duties as a daughter, I never felt. But now, — now I look back with diffidence upon my past life. What does it show? Richard, the Albertine to whom you yesterday so solemnly plighted your faith, is she actually worthy of you? With shame must she confess that she is not a worthy object of the love of such a man. Perhaps she will one day become so, and gain the true moral view of life and her duty to others, which you presented to her spiritual gaze; but who will support her, who guide her in the unknown way? who will sustain her in the conflict with outer and inner enemies that will rise to oppose her moral development? Tell me who, — when she no longer hears your voice, no longer reads a word of encouragement, nor has the right to pour out her soul to you, to deplore her grief and relate her struggles? Hitherto my heart has been a closed book to all. Yes, closed even to you; and now, when it would like to open itself, and confess its faults, would like to make you its conscience, now we are separated,— separated for years. Is there then nothing in this stern sentence that can be mitigated? Give me at least the consolation of writing to you, of being strengthened by your words in my aspirations towards the right.

"For the first time I have shown myself as I am to my mother; for the first time I have dared to give indication of a will of my own and to express my personal opinion. But did I do this as a daughter ought to have done? No. She was the oppressive tyrant, I the impotent subject. What did I gain by it? Nothing.

"The old rôle of passive obedience which I have hitherto played is repugnant to me, and this new one of defiant resistance is only the expression of my violated self-respect; both are unworthy of a daughter towards her mother. But is she then really a mother, — this woman without a heart, without love, without any other aspiration than to rule? Do I really have a child's duty towards her? Richard! My soul is a chaos, where the better powers struggle with the lower, where the newly struck chords are in continual disharmony with those which have sounded from my earliest childhood. My egotism cannot reconcile itself with my higher aspiration. Which of these two will go victorious from the strife? That is a question, my Richard, which only you can answer. Strengthen me, instruct me, encourage me; and I shall perhaps one day be able to raise my head and say, Now I am worthy of you! Do not abandon your poor Albertine."

Such was the letter the young girl wrote. The Doctor found it that noon on his table. This confession from so proud and reserved a nature as Albertine's touched him deeply, but it also inspired him with double courage to act in accordance with what honor and heart demanded. The Doctor saw clearly that Albertine needed something which would keep her noble instincts alive, and hinder them from being entirely choked by the weeds which the mother sowed in her daughter's heart. It is with our moral nature as with our mind; the latter is destroyed by lack of exercise: so with the moral faculties; without nourishment they pine away like the plant in want of water.

With these thoughts the Doctor seized his pen to reply to Albertine's letter. Hitherto their correspondence had only treated of their love; not a single word on anything but this eternally monotonous and yet eternally new subject had entered into it. Now, on the other hand, both had gained an entirely different view of their mutual positions. The lover had given place to the friend, to the guide.

Did Richard love Albertine less on this account? No! his love had become stronger and deeper at the same moment that he realized all the influence it might have upon Albertine's better nature.

This is what he wrote: —

"ALBERTINE: The feelings your letter called forth in my breast were so manifold that I neither can nor will describe them. The only thing I feel clearly is that you are now more precious and sacred to me than ever. Firmer and deeper than ever before is my love, now that you have allowed me to look into your soul; but equally firm is my resolution that not a word of this love shall be passed between us until I have the right openly to acknowledge it before God and the world. But as unchangeable as my resolution is in this respect, as clear does it stand before my soul that I, for the present, must exchange the rôle of a lover for that of a friend. Understand me rightly, my high-minded Albertine! I realize that you need a confidant, one upon whose judgment you can rely, in whose honor you can trust; and as you have told me that I am so happy as to inspire this confidence, let me be to you what a far-removed friend would be. The Richard who possesses your love, who has plighted to you his faith, has disappeared until the day when he can offer you his hand; but the friend remains.

"Little could I know your proud and strong heart if I did not believe that you alone, without support, would struggle and go victorious from the strife which will lead you to a noble development; but I were not the Richard who loves you most of all upon earth, if after such an appeal I could leave you alone.

"This is my advice: keep a diary; confide to it every day your thoughts, your feelings, your acts. Talk in these leaves to the absent friend; write down in them all that your heart wishes to tell him, and send them to him at the end of the year. Albertine, I shall read them; I shall be a stern and impartial judge, who will pay close heed to the faults, and earnestly try to correct them. But these leaves must not be used to express the regret our love engenders; they must only be a means through which we are both led to a clear understanding of our higher duties. Ah, my beloved friend, these notes will become a strong incentive for your Richard to try to make himself deserving of the high opinion you have of him.

"Now a few words about your mother; 'this woman without a heart,' you say. Child, these words are too hard. How do you know but what a heart beats under this cold exterior, but what there is love in her sternness? You ought at least to believe this of the one who gave you life. You say that you have shown yourself to her as you are. Albertine, as a daughter you owe her respect and love, even if she as a mother has been hard and cold; for mark well, *It is never a reason for us to forget our duty towards others because others forget it towards us.* When your sense of right and your conscience tell you that you cannot obey her, you ought to show frankness in your resistance, not defiance; and through your respect assuage the bitterness of your words.

"And now, my beloved, a long farewell; but neither this farewell, nor any power on earth, can force me to give you up. I have your promise, you have mine; and while I will continue to work with all my strength to be able one day to call you my wife, I shall in the mean time never cease to regard you as my betrothed, for this you are, if a solemn oath taken before God has the power to bind. The vows which unite us can be dissolved only by death.

"Thy RICHARD."

The next day after the ball neither Albertine nor the Professorskan appeared. The forenoon had been spent in sleep, and when dinner was announced, the Professorskan sent word that she was indisposed. The meal was unusually dull, the young people were low-spirited. Ernst was silent as ever; Arvid had not yet succeeded in gaining his equilibrium; and Jenny, the main source of joy in the house, was, as she herself said, a little out of sorts. The Major was in a particularly bad humor, and this threw a shadow of inquietude over the Majorskan's serene face. After they had drunk coffee, the Major rode off to the fields. Ernst took a walk to Hjernebro; Arvid shut himself up in his room, and the Doctor went to visit his sick.

Jenny sat in the saloon by an open window, with a book before her; but the gaze which rested upon it did not move from one syllable to another. No, it stood still.

On one of the little sofas sat the Majorskan busily engaged in cutting out linen. Sometimes a glance flew over to her daughter, but she asked no questions concerning her abstracted appearance.

After a while Jenny shook her head, as if to drive away some strange impressions, turned her face towards her mother, and when she met her eyes, said smiling, —

"I can lay a wager, Malin lilla, that you are now thinking, What is the matter with Jenny, to sit there and stare before her?"

"Yes! I was just wondering about it, for you do not exactly belong to the thoughtful ones."

"You certainly cannot mean to assert that I ought to be counted among the thoughtless?"

Jenny rose, and went to seat herself on a bench at her mother's feet.

"No, my child, you are a very sensible girl, but you are not one of those who ponder over things; you are rather one who sees life from its bright side."

"That is true; but sometimes thoughts and impressions accumulate to that degree in the soul, that it requires a great effort to get free from these workings of the mind. But you do not ask me what I am thinking of."

"You know, Jenny, that I never ask for your confidence, but wait until I receive it voluntarily. If it has any value, it ought to be given without urging, while, on the contrary, a question always, sooner or later, reveals to me all your thoughts and feelings."

"Yes, mamma, you are right. Who should be my heart's *confidante*, and read all my thoughts and feelings, if not you? Still I am afraid that I shall this time make you a very singular communication, which will undoubtedly surprise you. It seems to me as if I wished both to laugh and cry."

Jenny caressed her mother's hands, and said with her bright smile, —

"I give you full permission, Malin lilla, to laugh right heartily at your Jenny, for when I think closely upon the matter, the whole affair only deserves ridicule."

"Well, I am not against it. I am more fond of seeing you smile at your little mistakes than weep over them. Buoyancy and a cheerful view of life belong to your age. Yes, so perverted are your Malin's ideas, dear Jenny, that she believes your youthful exuberance of spirits to be far more beneficial to a sound moral development, than a gloomy brooding which usually engenders dissatisfaction and despondency. But now, out with your great confidence, which probably begins like this, 'There was once a girl called Jenny.'"

"Precisely. That girl, ever since she was a child, had seen a young man, six years older than she, grow up with her. His name was Fritz Silfverkrona. She can remember this Fritz very well as a lively youth, and at fourteen years of age

she wrote in a diary, made for the occasion, that he was in all respects an agreeable young man."

"Very correct," said the Majorskan, smiling, "and that diary her mother was allowed to read."

"Yes, indeed, and Fru mamma found it good to laugh at it right merrily."

"And the girl Jenny became so provoked on this account that she threw the trash into the fire."

"True, but at this juncture she received a very stern teacher, who kept her so busily occupied, that she had no time to think of the twenty-two-years-old Baron Fritz, who besides had the politeness to leave the place."

"And remain away four years."

"No, you are mistaken, he never came back. To be sure, a form returned with a face resembling his, of the same stature, and bearing his name; but it was not the sprightly and enthusiastic youth who had gone away four years before. No, it was a pale, indifferent, sickly, and effeminate nobleman, who thought only of luxury and comfort, who squandered immense sums, merely for the sake of fitting up the mansion of his forefathers with unexampled magnificence. During all this he remained entirely unconcerned about the welfare of his dependants; did not take a step to better their pecuniary condition, and had no eyes for the oppression which a hard inspector exercised over them."

"But to Jenny and her parents he was just the same. His friendship for them had outlived the man himself, if I may so express it."

"Yes, and the result was that however provoked Jenny became at his lack of sympathy for the dependants, at his insane passion for a foolish display, and however much she teased him with speeches about his idleness and effeminacy, she nevertheless promised him, at his request, to remain a sisterly friend to *him.*"

"And in that sisterly friend he gained a little torment, who continually found fault with his behavior, gave him sharp rebukes, and sometimes laughed at him quite unmercifully."

"But he received all these attacks with the most phlegmatic indifference; and again with such a tone of friendliness and submission, that she really began to like him for it."

"To this it contributed not a little that he now and then commissioned Jenny to distribute in his behalf bountiful sums of money to the poor, on holidays, and other festive occasions."

"That cannot be disputed. In short, she liked him right well. Some time elapsed in this way, then —"

Jenny paused, and quite a pretty blush spread over her cheeks and brow. With a charming and embarrassed smile, she looked up into her mother's face, and asked, —

"Can you guess what then happened, Malin lilla?"

"Pretty nearly," answered the Majorskan, with a smile.

"No, Malin, you cannot."

"Wait, and you shall hear; then there came to visit Jenny's parents a handsome young doctor, with an attractive manner and a superior intellect; in fact, a highly gifted personage in every respect. When he spoke, Jenny kept silent and listened with glowing cheeks to his words. When she talked with him, her conversation was more fluent, her voice milder, her eyes more beaming than at other times. She began to draw comparisons between her friend the Baron and this new-comer, and the result was that the poor Baron was thrown into the shade. Her friendship for him was forgotten, she became capricious, and often unkind towards this friend of her childhood."

"O no, mamma, she did not!" said Jenny, crimson.

"Be silent, and let me finish. She

me unkind and unmerciful to the
ın, and made him the object of her
ısms every time he approached her;
this was not enough. There was
her young girl, who was beautiful
wealthy. Every time the Doctor
ed his eyes to this young girl, Jenny
me displeased. She began to com-
herself with the latter, who was in
nany respects her superior; and for
first time she felt envy awaken in
heart. In a word, Jenny had, after
Doctor's arrival, become envious and
icious."

No one can blame you for spoiling a
l cause," exclaimed Jenny, laughing,
e she hid her face against her moth-
breast. "You paint that poor Jenny
irably, and if you are allowed to
› on, she bids fair to become a real
› monster in the end."

Not precisely that, but she was
ır the influence of feelings that were
noble, and had she not (as she usual-
id) begun to work earnestly against
ı, they would easily have stifled the
er instincts of her soul. During all
past life nothing had occurred to
e these to life; but the dawning fancy
he Doctor, and the appearance of so
ɡerous a rival as Cousin Albertine,
d them forth, and she was persecuted
:he demons of envy and discontent.
ıerto Jenny had never aimed to
ɜe any particular person; the Doctor,
the first time, incited this endeavor.
wished to please him, and everything
h placed itself in the way of this
e was to her disagreeable. For
reason she became so ill-disposed
rds the Baron and Albertine. In
equence of this effort to make her-
liked by the young physician, she
n to disquiet herself because she was
beautiful, because she did not pos-
all the outward advantages which
nguish Albertine; and she took it so
h the more to heart, as she very well
that the Doctor, in spite of his ex-
quisite politeness, was not drawn to her by any especial interest."

"All this her mother saw, and kept silent."

"Well, what would you have had her do? If she had spoken to her daughter privately, had forbidden her to coquet with the Doctor, had told her that he did not care anything for her, and with a long lecture, had tried to make it clear to her that it was very wrong to be envious, do you really think that she would have gained anything especial?"

"Ah no! I do not mean to assert it; on the contrary, I believe that Jenny would have been the same as before."

"So do I; and it might easily have happened that Jenny in any case would have flattered herself with possessing a good share of the Doctor's attention; for that was a thing which mamma could not precisely ascertain."

"Malin, you are perfectly charming," said Jenny, kissing her mother's hands; "for, after all, a certain comparison between the mignonette and the rose made far more impression upon Jenny than the most edifying lecture."

"Maybe. In the mean time the mother said nothing; she observed her daughter very closely, and soon saw that Jenny would not be able to analyze her feelings alone, but would some fine day come and sit at mamma's feet and relate all that her mother had previously guessed. She remained in expectation of this, when all at once Jenny discovered quite unexpectedly that the Doctor — was in love with her beautiful cousin."

"What effect did this discovery have?" asked Jenny, leaning her glowing face against the Majorskan's breast.

"That I expect to hear from you."

"Beloved, beloved Malin, you shall. When my suspicion that the Doctor loved Albertine in spite of his apparent indifference obtained a decided confirmation, I felt as if one had given me a

violent blow, which for a few seconds deprived me of consciousness; but the next moment I had regained the full use of my faculties, at the recollection of the danger in which Albertine stood unless I succeeded in bringing Arvid to reason. I forgot my own grief in thinking how to save Albertine. 'What terrible havoc Arvid will occasion if he is allowed to follow his irritated feelings!' thought I, and exerted myself to the best of my ability to calm him. After you had taken him in hand, I became tranquil. While you were having your little meeting with the Doctor, I at length became master of my feelings. I felt convinced that I might possibly become useful to Albertine, — Albertine, who stood so alone in the world. Therefore I resolved to offer her my friendship, although my wounded heart half rebelled against it. I considered it my duty to show Albertine how gladly I would be her friend. After this occurrence came the journey to D—— and the ball. During the few hours which have elapsed since then, I have felt that I should never succeed in understanding myself until I had poured out my heart to you. Now it stands clear to me that I am more provoked with myself than with the Doctor for his liking Albertine, for the occurrences of the past few weeks have appeared before my memory, and they are not precisely to my advantage. Besides, it seems to me that my behavior towards both the Baron and Albertine has been more than unfriendly, which I seriously repent. And finally, what pains me most is that you cannot be at all proud of your Jenny."

"But I am nevertheless; for your course of action towards Albertine has shown your thoroughly good heart, my Jenny."

"Dearest Malin, do not spoil me. Remember that I did all in my power to try to make myself lovely." Jenny put her mother's hands over her face as she whispered, "And was I not on the point myself of — of —"

"Loving the Doctor," completed the Majorskan, pressing Jenny to her heart; "but you do not love him?"

"No, mamma, it was only a dawning fancy, which, however, has occasioned me many painful hours and given me an experience which will be of benefit to me. At all events, beloved mamma, I have much to atone for towards Albertine; I would so like to contribute to her happiness."

When the Majorskan bent down and kissed Jenny's brow she felt so grateful to God for giving her a daughter like Jenny, with such an intrinsically good and upright heart.

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A fortnight had elapsed when the twenty-seventh anniversary of the Major and Majorskan's wedding-day occurred. The Major liked to see gladness around him on this day, and a ball had always been given at Rönby in celebration of it. It was the sixteenth day of August.

Albertine had, the two first days after the ball at D——, been doomed to remain in her room. Her solitude, however, was once sweetened by the Professorskan, who held a long and scarcely edifying speech in which she set forth Albertine's culpability in daring to oppose her, and demonstrated that a child's duty is blindly to obey her mother, etc., etc. Not a single word of love or consideration passed the lips of this mother, who was a stranger to all such feelings. She had given her children life, and therefore she considered that she alone had the right to control them, while she denied them the right to entertain an independent thought. The life she had bestowed upon them belonged, according to her opinion, not to them, but to her.

Jenny had stolen up to her cousin in spite of her aunt's assertion that Alber-

tine desired to be alone on account of her indisposition, She chatted so cordially and merrily with Albertine that she gained her good-will, and dissipated a part of the depression which weighed upon her.

Minna in many respects stood too far below Albertine to be able to understand a soul like hers. She could therefore not easily be made a confidante of all the the thoughts and feelings which dwelt within Albertine. In the conversations with Jenny during these two days in which she was deprived of all other society Albertine had learned to realize that such a friend as Jenny would be to her a rich source of consolation and comfort.

After the days of captivity followed two weeks which elapsed without any private interviews between the Doctor and Albertine. The morning walks were continued, but now Jenny constituted the third person. Count Stormhjelm was at Rönby daily, but was almost always accompanied by the Baron. The Count actually tortured Albertine with his attentions, but without success. On the contrary, her aversion shone forth so plainly that it many times seemed as if it must have offended him, but the next moment he redoubled his attentions, and that with a persistence which often threw Albertine into despair.

Finally the great day arrived. There was a terrible bustle and stir at Rönby. Jenny had her hands full in arranging flowers in all the vases, and in a moment of exigency she had rushed up to Arvid, and forced him to come and help her, although he lay plunged in a romantic despair, but nevertheless continued to nourish the hope that he should finally find some suitable opportunity to make a favorable impression on Albertine.

Just as Jenny stood mounted on a step-ladder before a closet in the hall, and took down the porcelain, which Arvid received, the Professorskan appeared on the stairs, and the Major at the hall-door.

"My dear Gustaf! what are you thinking of, constantly to allow your children to perform menial occupations? It is perfectly shocking to meet the Fröken at one moment before a loom; at another, as now, engaged in a servant-girl's work; and finally, on a third occasion, to see her entertaining company. It is really dreadful to witness the simple habits which *my brother's children* have fallen into."

"Listen, Sophie; let my children be, and do not meddle with them, but rather see to it that the people of the village do not have too many remarks to make against your own Fröken daughter. I will say no more now, so as not to disturb the peace of the house."

The Major took a few rapid steps across the hall into the saloon.

The Professorskan cast an irritated glance after him, and walked with her proud bearing out into the court-yard.

The afternoon came, and with it a house full of people. The Professorskan was haughty, stiff, and showy as usual. The Baron was politeness itself, spoke to the Professorskan about Albertine's beauty, and hoped to be allowed to stand in her Grace's favor, as he should soon have to lay claim to it. The Professorskan answered him in an obliging tone. The Count, too, showed her extreme attention, and the two gentlemen seemed to compete to pay her homage.

The music struck up for the polonaise. The Baron opened it with the Majorskan; the Count conducted the Professorskan. Then came the first waltz. The Baron and Jenny were the first couple, and the Professorskan came near uttering a cry of horror when her glance fell on the second. Was it actually her daughter? Yes, it was Albertine in her pink silk dress, who was waltzing with the son of her gardener. The Professorskan's sharp

eyes widened, and she felt that she needed all her self-respect not to give free vent to her anger.

"Is your Grace ill?" inquired a voice beside her. She looked round with an abrupt motion and a flaming brow, for she found herself, in her own estimation, publicly disgraced.

The Count stood at her side.

"It seems as if I have scarcely more success to-day than I had at D——," resumed the Count. "I have again been compelled to stand back for the handsome young Doctor. It must be admitted that he is a very fine-looking man; and with such an appearance as his, he can cause more than one young girl to forget that he has grown up among celery and parsnips."

"No outward advantage, Herr Count, can make a Fröken von Krug forget that fellow's simple origin," answered the Professorskan, sharply.

"And yet the Fröken is now dancing with him?"

"I suppose my brother has prevailed upon her to do it, for he makes a terrible ado about that man. But I can assure you, Count, that my daughter feels the whole weight of this civility."

"It does not seem so, at least."

The Count regarded the waltzers through his lorgnette. The Professorskan, who felt nettled by the Count's words, rose hastily, left the saloon and went into the parlor.

The Count looked after her and muttered, —

"She shall assist me. I must possess this proud and contrary girl. What cruel irony that I, Count Stormhjelm, young, rich, and handsome, meet resistance from a girl who only belongs to the petty aristocracy! But this resistance only stimulates me; I swear that I will conquer."

With the second waltz the Count was equally unsuccessful; Albertine then waltzed with the Baron. He was obliged to content himself with the fourth, for the third was promised to Arvid. The fourth waltz came. The Count stood before Albertine with a pale face, in whose whole expression lay something of smothered passion, something which gave indication that the Count was ready to give vent to his restrained feelings.

"This waltz, my Fröken, you will grant *me*," said the Count.

In silence, with a slight bend of the head, Albertine gave him her hand. The next instant his arm was around her, and very firmly did this arm, which led her through the mazes of the waltz, clasp the slender waist.

"I have a favor to ask of you," whispered the Count during the waltz.

"What is that?"

"Grant me a few moments after the waltz."

"I do not understand you; Herr Count!" They now paused to rest, and the Count began to talk of indifferent things; but when they again danced, and none but Albertine could hear him, he resumed, — no longer in an entreating, but almost in a threatening tone, —

"I desire to say a few words to you, Fröken von Krug, and I hope you will not refuse my request, when I assure you that I might otherwise feel a desire to ask Doctor Bergström what has brought him so often in the vicinity of the forester's cottage."

"The Doctor would undoubtedly answer the question," replied Albertine, proudly.

"Even if I asked the question aloud, before your mother?"

Albertine turned pale.

"A few minutes' conversation, during a short promenade in the open air, in sight of all, — that is what I ask; or rather a little rest on the rustic sofa under the tree opposite the window?"

Albertine was silent. Not a word further was exchanged between them

during the waltz. At length it ended. Quite politely the Count conducted her out into the garden, saying, —

"The heat is oppressive in here."

He led her to the sofa and took his seat beside her. Resting his elbow against the back of the sofa, he spoke with so indifferent an air that no one of all who swarmed around them could believe but that the Count was conversing on the most ordinary subject in the world. Albertine leaned back in the corner of the sofa and played with her lorgnette, while the Count's words were unable to produce any effect upon her face, except that it became colder and prouder. On the front stoop stood the Doctor, conversing with Ernst. The Baron and Jenny promenaded down the avenue. Arvid was on the point of putting his head right through the window-pane in his father's room when he saw Albertine and the Count sitting alone by themselves.

"It is with aversion," said the Count, "as with love; it stimulates and excites. If we inspire love, we long to enjoy the felicity which smiles at us; when we call forth aversion, we are seized with a violent desire to overcome it." The Count paused a second and looked at Albertine, who, cold and motionless, gave no indication of either approval or disapproval.

"Why do you detest me?" asked he, suddenly.

"Herr Count, who says that I detest you?" Albertine's voice was so indifferent as almost to wound.

"Your whole behavior towards me leads me to think so."

"My behavior has then spoken falsely; I do not detest you, Herr Count."

"You avoid me."

"Not at all; I neither seek nor avoid you."

The Count made a gesture of impatience, but checked himself and resumed with an indifferent smile, — not intending that any of those eyes which were so often directed to him and Albertine should be able to guess the subject of their conversation, —

"Before the ball at D—— you were pleased to show me a cold civility, which, it is true, gave me no reason to suppose that I had succeeded in gaining your sympathy, but neither did I seem to be more hateful to you than others. But since the ball, on my visits here, you have shown me such a plainly expressed ill-will that it actually resembles aversion. In what way have I drawn it upon myself?"

"*Ill-will* and *aversion*, Herr Count, — these are very superlative terms in our moderate times. I assure you that you have not yet succeeded in exciting any such feelings."

"Be so kind as to give me a suitable name for the feeling which has governed you since the ball at D——." The Count's voice was not as calm as his face.

"Need I do so? I should think your own intuition would tell you *what* has changed me and *what name* this change ought to have."

"Pardon me, but I really lack this fine sense."

"Well then, it is no more than right for me to enlighten you." Albertine's tone could not have been colder. "You have, through my mother's mediation, tried to *force* me to dance with you, after previously asserting, in direct opposition to the true state of the case, that you had my promise for a waltz which I had already promised another. You would have cruelly offended me by such behavior if you had not shown yourself to be a man entirely ignorant of what etiquette requires of one who *believes* himself to stand higher than others through his birth. It is this conviction which has engendered in me the one desire to expose myself as little as possible to a renewed proof of this lack in your education or your character.

I have now explained myself, and hope that you will not force me to listen to you longer."

"One moment, my Fröken," rejoined the Count, who during Albertine's words had become very pale. "I am only at the beginning of our conversation, and you must pardon me if I now *compel* you to listen to me. Every excuse for what has occurred would only be an impotent attempt, as my behavior is inexcusable, unless these words were sufficient not merely to explain, but also to vindicate it. Fröken Albertine, (the Count leaned forward as if to break a twig from a bush, while he added,) "*I love you.*" His clear blue eyes flashed upon the young girl, who remained immovable, without evincing that these words made the slightest impression upon her. He continued: —

"I love you passionately and earnestly. Every object which stands between you and me is to me hateful, and in such moments of wild animosity I should be ready to forget all that the world requires of me in this respect. Ah, Albertine, I feel that your resistance only excites my worst feelings, and puts me in a condition to commit any deed whatsoever rather than give you up. You can make of me either a saint or a demon."

The Count ceased, and regarded Albertine, who remained to appearance cold and impassible. As he did not receive any answer he resumed: —

"Often has this confession trembled upon my lips, but your *hauteur* has withheld me; and it would probably have remained unexpressed a while longer, had not your coldness piqued me, and my jealousy driven me to seek an explanation. Yesterday I intended to ask your hand of your mother, but I kept silent because I wished to know first what I had to hope from you, what I had to fear from Silfverkrona. The latter I know, the former remains for me to learn. Fröken Albertine, I am not presumptuous enough to believe myself loved. No, I only entreat you to give me hope, to tell me that your heart is free, that you will one day become my wife. Say one word, only one!"

"That word, Herr Count, deprives you of all hope. I have already given away my heart."

"Beware of what you say," muttered the Count, and leaned his head in his hand to conceal the expression of a violent emotion which he could not restrain. "It is then true, what they assert, that —"

The Count checked himself, for on Albertine's brow was enthroned so noble a seriousness that he lacked all strength to continue.

"Pardon me, Fröken von Krug," stammered he, in an agitated voice; "I do not mean to wound you, nor offend you, but I feel that every drop of my blood will be turned to gall if you do not give me hope, if you do not take back those terrible words which annihilate all my most beautiful dreams. From mercy to us both, say that what you have just uttered is only a cruel jest."

"Herr Count, I do not belong to those who jest with the feelings. I have uttered a serious, an irrevocable truth." Albertine rose.

"The forester is then right in his assertion that you have had secret meetings with Doctor Bergström," said the Count, in a voice choked with rage, and offered Albertine his arm.

"Herr Count, I have answered you openly, and expect that after this answer of mine you will have sufficient delicacy not to continue the conversation."

"You deceive yourself, my Fröken, if you think you have disarmed me with these words. Have I not said that difficulties only increased my fancy? Ah! this beloved of yours, this happy man, is the Doctor, although you do not have courage to confess that you have made a choice which your mother cannot possibly approve."

"If you think I lack courage to acknowledge that my heart belongs to the noblest man I know, you are very much mistaken. No, Herr Count, I am proud of it; and now you know all."

"Which all does not hinder me from asking your hand of your mother within two days."

The Count's look was now icy and stern.

"Herr Count!"

Albertine turned pale and trembled.

The Count bowed, and left her at the front steps.

The Doctor had remained standing, leaning against the door-post; he was now alone. As Albertine passed by him, she whispered, —

"Richard, the Count will in two days request my hand of my mother, although I have already given him a refusal."

"Show *courage*, without forgetting the respect you owe your mother! Be mild, but decided, without offending, and hope in God and me!"

"Thanks!"

The next moment Albertine was dancing a galop with Ernst. The Baron had seated himself by the Professorskan, and the Count started off like a whirlwind with Jenny.

Our young Cadet, who stood and stared at the Count and Albertine during their whole conversation, noticed, with the keen scrutiny of jealousy, the expression of love and passion which the Count had not been able entirely to conceal. This discovery had wholly put an end to our young Arvid's self-command. When the Count and Albertine rose from the seat, he rushed up to his room where he threw himself on the sofa. He seized his hair with both hands and came very near bursting into sobs, but he happened to look up at a mirror hanging opposite, in which he recognized the future *Herr General* with the air of a boy who had just come from school after receiving a good feruling. We will leave him to settle his grievances alone, and go instead to listen to what the Baron said to the Professorskan.

"It is quite animated this evening," he began.

"Ah yes! but the company is rather mixed," answered the Professorskan, who in spite of all the politeness of the Count and the Baron towards both herself and Albertine, was still in a bad humor, because she could not possibly forget that *her* daughter had danced with the son of one of her servants.

"I, for my part, have not felt in such good spirits for a long time."

And true it was that the Baron looked unusually cheerful and exhilarated.

"I also venture quite humbly to ask your Grace to grant me a private interview to-morrow afternoon. I have long had a matter at heart which I desire to confide to you."

The Professorskan smiled quite obligingly and declared that she would receive him with the greatest pleasure. The ill-humor had now disappeared, the cloud on her brow had fled, leaving pure sunshine behind it. The worthy lady did not for an instant doubt the nature of what the Baron had to say to her. It could not very well be anything but a formal proposal for Albertine's hand, for which she had been prepared several weeks. The thought that she had at length arrived so far put her in such a remarkable good-humor that she even made up her mind not to mention the gross offence Albertine had committed when she danced with the Doctor.

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The following afternoon the Professorskan sat in the pavilion, attired with such extreme care that it could be plainly seen that she expected some call upon which she set a high value.

The Majorskan and Jenny had still much to attend to, and Albertine had

ridden out with the Major to some new fields. The Professorskan had given her consent to it.

Jenny stood all alone in the saloon, engaged in wiping a quantity of glass. The table was covered with china and crystal. Jenny hummed with a fresh clear voice as she zealously and rapidly continued her work. Suddenly she heard a carriage roll up to the steps.

"Who in Heaven's name can that be? It would be delightful if one had to receive company just now," thought Jenny, and went to the glass doors which opened out on the stoop. "O, it is only the Baron!" continued she thoughtfully, and returned calmly to the table.

The Baron entered the saloon quite unembarrassed.

"Thanks for yesterday!" said he to Jenny, who offered him her hand. "I have not for a long time felt so enlivened, so rejuvenated, so completely carried back to the time when I was twenty and you fourteen."

"And therefore you must come here to-day and thank me," answered Jenny jestingly, without allowing herself to be disturbed in her work by the Baron's presence.

"Not exactly; but as I was obliged to come here, I could not refrain from thanking Fröken Jenny for enabling me once more to rejoice at something here on earth."

"Good gracious, how you say it! precisely like an old man who has been deprived by sorrow and misfortune of all joy on earth, and not like a young man who has so many reasons to be contented with his lot."

"What do you know, Fröken Jenny, about my age and my sorrows? Perhaps, although young in years, I have had an old man's bitter experience of the world, and perhaps I have gone through sorrows of so painful a nature that I am surprised myself to find my heart accessible to any warm and life-giving feelings, even if the first impression came from you. For the discovery that my heart is not yet completely dead, I stand indebted to Jenny."

"No flattery between us friends," said Jenny, with her sunny smile. "I did not constitute the whole ball yesterday; there were so many others who contributed more essentially to the joy than I."

"For me there was, in this respect, no one but Fröken Jenny. She brought me back to a time so glad, so rich in beautiful dreams, that I entirely forgot the misery which lies between it and the present."

"Then you have actually passed through bitter sufferings?"

"Yes! But leave them; they come back soon enough when I am alone, without my needing to darken the bright moments I enjoy with you." The Baron seized Jenny's hand, and looked at her with an earnest expression.

"Do you know, Baron Fritz," said Jenny, smiling, "I too thought it was pleasant to discover in you something of your former self; and when yesterday I saw you laugh and jest, as before, I could not comprehend why you were not always so, instead of the effeminate creature that you have been for the last few years. Ah! how often have I not desired that the former Fritz Silfverkrona would return!"

"And if he returned, would you then give him your friendship?"

"Most assuredly; especially as I, notwithstanding he has now for several years been an indifferent and tiresome egotist, have always liked him as a brother, although I have sometimes been seriously provoked because he, who could do so much, preferred to do nothing."

"Jenny, he has been extremely wretched, and is still far from happy." The Baron uttered these words with deep earnestness.

"For all unhappiness, all the soul's

suffering, there is one medicine, and this medicine is called *work*. When you engage in some useful activity, which takes up all your time, you forget your sufferings and your sorrows. Your zealous efforts to be of use will give you satisfaction. If, on the contrary, you abandon yourself to inactivity, ennui, and idleness, your grief becomes a corroding wound, which gradually kills both feeling and heart."

"Thanks for your friendly words." The Baron raised Jenny's hand to his lips. "I shall preserve them in my memory, as I have before done with all that you have said to me."

"I am not satisfied with that," said Jenny, laughing, "for if you only enshrine them there, it is just as if they had never been uttered."

"What do you then wish?"

"That they might rouse you from the state of indifference which you are now in; that they might induce you to act, instead of brooding over what you have suffered."

"Would to God that they were able to draw me out of the despondency which generally clouds my soul, and makes me incapable of acting!"

"If you only desire it earnestly, you will succeed." Jenny gave him a friendly look. "Just think what rich consolation and satisfaction you would find in the consciousness of having filled your place in life, in the memory of the good you have done."

"To be a zealous citizen and a beneficent person, one must be ambitious, must desire to receive the applause of his fellows, and I am not ambitious."

"Is it actually Fritz Silfverkrona who talks so?" exclaimed Jenny. "Were we not good solely for the sake of the good, our goodness would not be of much value; and did we not try, through a useful activity, to perform our part nobly here in life, with a different object than the applause of our fellow-beings, we should not be worthy to raise our glance to Him who will one day judge how we have fulfilled our duties." There was something simple and warm-hearted in Jenny's words.

The Baron smiled, and said, —

"You are right, Jenny, now as always; but do not become too conceited on that account, for the merit of your sound views of life does not belong to you alone."

"No! it belongs to mamma," said Jenny, smiling; "let it therefore be to you of some little benefit.

"Rest assured that I will try. But tell me where shall I find the Professorskan? I have asked for a private interview with her this afternoon."

"O, O, faithless chevalier, who, although you are started on a lover's errand, wait a whole half-hour on the way, and take up your precious time with me! You deserve the mitten for this lack of zeal in your love."

"To whom shall I propose? Who says such a thing?"

"To Albertine, of course."

"That was only an answer to the first question."

"Ah! you wish to know who told me? Very well! It is my common-sense which draws the conclusion that a young man does not request a private interview with an old lady whose daughter is young and beautiful, unless with the purpose of asking for this daughter's hand."

"And you speak of this so jestingly?"

"Yes, certainly; or did you think that this discovery would cost me tears?"

"Not just that, but — "

"Something like it. I ought at least to have blushed or turned pale, you think." Jenny laughed heartily.

"But tell me seriously what would Jenny think if I married?"

"If you made a good choice, and gained a wife who loved you, I would

dance at your wedding with the same joy as at that of one of my brothers!"

"I am, then, nothing but a brother to you?"

"Are you not contented with that?"

"I do not know."

"There, Herr Baron,"—Jenny smilingly made a deep courtesy to him,—"my gracious aunt is to be found in the large pavilion down in the garden."

"Then I am dismissed," said the Baron, laughing. "Adieu, my little sister; but I ought to tell you that you cannot have the pleasure of dancing at the wedding of Fröken Albertine and myself, for I positively do not intend to propose."

"Therein you do wisely, dear brother," exclaimed Jenny, playfully, "for you would surely have run the risk of getting the mitten. But now go! My aunt will never forgive you if you keep her waiting."

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"Very welcome, Herr Baron!" said her Grace, with her glassy smile, as the Baron entered, and offered him her hand, which he raised to his lips with gracious politeness while she invited him to be seated.

"I have for a long time with almost painful anxiety desired to unburden my heart to your Grace. The success of what I have to ask for depends mainly upon you, perhaps also a little on the friendship you are pleased to entertain for me."

The Baron, to all appearance, was strained to the utmost.

"My dear Baron, I think I have proven that I cherish true affection for you, and this ought to have inspired you with courage to speak frankly. You can always count upon my co-operation in all that contributes to your happiness."

"Your Grace is more than good, but you now allow yourself to be led by this goodness without knowing what I intend to ask."

"Any request that you may make I can most assuredly grant."

"Ah! this kind reception inspires me with courage."

The Baron leaned back in his easy-chair and cast a furtive glance at the Professorskan, whose whole face indicated that she expected something agreeable. A long pause ensued, during which the Professorskan in her imagination already saw herself as the Baron's mother-in-law, enthroned in the stately Stjernbro, and the object of the homage and envy of all. Ah! she fancied herself sure of the realization of all her lofty dreams of rank and wealth, beside which her own sank into insignificance! She considered herself in the vanity of her heart to have at length attained the so eagerly longed-for aim. This cold and insensible woman, who seldom experienced any other emotion than possibly that of wounded pride, now felt her heart beat with impatient expectation for what the Baron had further to say. At last he passed his hand over his brow, rose from his reclining position, and said with his lisping and drawling voice,—

"I must frankly confess that one of my motives for working so zealously to get your Grace to Rönby was that I might thereby gain an opportunity of studying a character of which I could not possibly have any clear comprehension so long as you resided in the city, and my intercourse with your family was so superficial. Upon the acquaintance with this character depended the resolution I would eventually take. If I found it such as I hoped and desired, I had already beforehand decided my course of action." The Baron paused.

"And what has been the result of this investigation? Is the person in question such as you desired her? That it is a woman is a matter of course, as I have not brought any masculine individual with me," said her Grace in a certain playful tone.

"It is indeed a young girl that these studies have concerned," replied the Baron with a peculiar smile, not entirely free from irony, "and I have really found in her such a warm and affectionate heart, such a high degree of devotion and modest submission, that I congratulate myself upon being able to contribute, with your assistance, to a worthy recompense for these good qualities." The Baron again stopped.

"Good gracious, how love blinds people!" thought her Grace; "but as he places those qualities so high, and believes that he finds them in Albertine, I do not mean to draw him out of his delusion in any way."

The Professorskan looked at the Baron in a manner which indicated that she expected him to continue.

"To gain a true and impartial idea of the young girl's disposition was not easy, as her position put hinderances in the way of a more familiar approach. Consequently I had no opportunity of witnessing those involuntary acts through which the main traits in a character shine forth clear and unobscured. I was therefore obliged to turn to a third person." The Baron again made a pause.

"And you have chosen me for this third?" Her Grace smiled again in a very facetious way.

"I did not dare to be so bold. No! I turned to one of her own age, who gave me all the information I desired. Besides, I followed the person in question with close attention whenever I had a chance, and after a thorough trial I have found her worthy a better social position than the one she occupies for the time. Therefore I have now at the last moment turned to your Grace."

"But, Herr Baron, I really think that that person's social position is not to be entirely despised; she belongs to a family which —"

"Is in the highest degree respectable, and her mother's family is of the old nobility. But yet —"

"You would like to raise her yet higher."

"Yes! I would like to assist her to the rights which she at present does not enjoy."

"Herr Baron, I do not understand you. What rights are there which my daughter does not enjoy?"

Her Grace's pride had been wounded by these words of the Baron, which she believed to refer to the strictness with which she had brought up her daughter.

"I beg your pardon, but I have not spoken of Fröken Albertine."

The Professorskan became fiery red; she straightened herself up and fastened her sharp and penetrating eyes upon the Baron. She had been plunged so hastily from the dizzy height of her illusions, that she could not possibly restrain the expression of the anger which boiled within her. She felt so enraged that she would have liked to crush the Baron with her glance. Had he not, through his double meaning, absolutely made game of *her*, — of her, Professorskan von Krug? This was something which she did not feel called upon to endure even from a Baron with Silfverkrona's property. She therefore asked in a sharp tone, —

"Of whom then did you speak? To my knowledge I have no influence over any person staying here except my daughter; consequently this whole conversation has only been a hoax." Her Grace threw her head back and looked the Baron steadily in the face.

"Such a lack of good breeding I hoped your Grace would not have attributed to me." There was a certain dignity in the Baron's manner as he uttered these words. "I was wrong in not immediately mentioning the name of the person of whom I spoke; it is Ma'mselle Minna."

"Minna!" The Professorskan stared

at the Baron, as if she feared that he had suddenly become insane. She thought to herself, "Is the man absolutely crazy? Does he mean to marry Minna?"

"Yes! your Grace's niece, Ma'mselle Minna Ekeberg."

If one had pressed a spring, it would not have produced a more hasty effect than was produced by these words on the Professorskan. She rose instantly from the sofa and asked in an exasperated tone, —

"What is your meaning, Herr Baron? Is it to insult me?"

"Your Grace promised to listen to me with kindness."

"I then supposed that your communication would be made with all the delicacy one has the right to require of a nobleman, when he talks with a lady of rank."

"I can solemnly assure your Grace that this delicacy will never be violated by me. Deign therefore to hear me with kindness." The Baron prevailed upon her to take a seat, as he added, "I promise to be brief, and hope that when I have explained myself your Grace will not be unfavorably disposed towards one who has only endeavored to fulfil a promise."

"I will listen to you, Herr Baron." The Professorskan's expression was hard and stern.

"Four years ago a person who possessed my warm affection and sincere respect — it was my betrothed — gave me a sacred confidence, for it was given when she lay on her death-bed. She made me promise that I would make of this confidence the best use for the person nearest concerned. This is the way the story runs: A Fröken Qvickfelt, several years younger than her sister, Professorskan von Krug, resided in the latter's house. The Professorskan engaged a music-teacher for her son, and Fröken Qvickfelt shared his instruction. Ekeberg — that was the name of the music-teacher — was a talented young man, but of low rank, for he was the son of a carpenter. This did not hinder him from being attractive and richly endowed. He possessed, through the gift of an uncle, a little property, so that with the income from his music lessons, he found himself in an independent pecuniary position. In short, a warm and fervent love arose between Fröken Charlotte Qvickfelt and young Ekeberg; which, when he obtained a music-director's place, did not seem to encounter any material obstacles. He proposed, but received from the elder sister so humiliating a refusal, that he drew back deeply wounded in his feelings. He wrote to Fröken Charlotte that his pride forbade him to try to enter a family who treated him with so much contempt. A few weeks afterwards he was taken very ill, and during his delirium he revealed the feelings he cherished for Fröken Charlotte to his sister, who took care of him. The sister, who saw her brother's life in danger, wrote to the Fröken and apprised her of it. The answer was that the next evening the Fröken sat at his bedside, which she never left. All efforts, all threats, on the part of the elder sister were fruitless; she remained with the one she loved.

"When he recovered from a severe inflammation of the lungs, they both went to Copenhagen, accompanied by his sister, and there married. Ekeberg, in consequence of his illness and his journey to Copenhagen, where they thought of residing, had formally resigned his position as music-director. One year after their marriage Ekeberg died of a lung complaint, and left behind him a widow with an unborn child. Directly after her husband's death she received the crushing intelligence that the firm with which Ekeberg's little property was invested had unexpectedly become bankrupt. In the midst of her sorrow for her husband she now stood without any

support on earth. She returned to Sweden and looked up her deceased husband's sister, who in the mean time had married a carpenter. In their house she gave birth to a daughter, whom on her death-bed she confided to her sister, the Professorskan's care.

"After Fru Ekeberg's death her sister stated as the condition upon which she adopted the tender orphan, that Ekeberg's sister should solemnly promise never to claim any relationship with the child; never to disclose whom it belonged to, or mention that her departed sister-in-law was a Qvickfelt. For the sake of the child's future she promised all that was desired of her, and the agreement was that the little girl should be given out as a daughter of the nurse which Fru von Krug saw that she would need before long for her second child, Fröken Albertine. Ekeberg's sister, without Fru Krug's suspecting it, procured a nurse, who was engaged, and before the world passed for the child's mother. Such was the story my betrothed related to me, and the child of whom it treated is Ma'mselle Minna. The promise I gave to the dying one was to influence your Grace to reinstate your unhappy niece in the better position to which her relationship with you gives her an indisputable right. I hope that she will no longer be kept in the dependent and unpleasant place which she now occupies. Before I presented this petition, I wished to convince myself whether her habits and character entitled her to the sympathy I felt for her; and all that I have heard from Fröken Albertine's lips has led me to think that she is worthy of both respect and good-will. Should your Grace, from compassion for the child, wish to acknowledge her claims to near relationship, I have been commissioned by the departed to deliver a little gift to Ma'mselle Minna Ekeberg, which will secure her pecuniary independence. If my slight recommendation has any power, then I entreat you (the only one besides me, who knows the secret) may restore the young girl to her true position."

The Baron ceased.

"I have listened to you, Herr Baron, and verily do not know whether I am in my right mind or not. You tell me a long story about my sister and me, of which I know nothing; and on the ground of it you wish me to acknowledge as a relative a servant-girl, whom out of mercy I have taken from the street. Herr Baron, I solemnly declare that whole story to be a fabrication."

The Professorskan rose to put an end to the interview.

"But, your Grace! I can with my honor vouch for the truth of it; and although you strongly deny it all, a voice within tells you that every word is in accordance with the actual circumstances. Ah! compensate the young girl for the loss of her parents!" The Baron had also risen. "I entreat, I conjure you to do it."

"Enough, Herr Baron; I hope you will no longer continue this conversation, when I have told you openly that all you have alleged is a fabrication which your politeness will undoubtedly forbid you to repeat. Besides, even if it were true, it seems to me that you ought to realize the impropriety of meddling in family affairs in this uncalled-for way."

"Your Grace must pardon me, but when none of the relatives are willing to acknowledge the wronged person, it becomes the duty of the stranger who knows the circumstances to defend the right of the sufferer. In the mean time, and before I give any promise, I ask you to be so kind as to reflect upon what I have said until to-morrow. Believe me! it deserves to be considered. I will then present myself to learn your decision." The Baron bowed and left.

For two days after the conversation with the Baron, the Professorskan kept herself shut up in her room. Her self-love and her vanity had suffered a terrible defeat. She had not only been cheated in her dearest hopes, but the Baron had even had the shamelessness to declare that he had persuaded her to come to Rönby *solely* for Minna's sake. This was indeed so humiliating that she felt almost suffocated from chagrin and resentment. For what object had she consented to a reconciliation with her brother?

Simply to hear the Baron relate Minna's family record!

Ah! such a thing might have brought on a nervous attack, had not a ray of hope and satisfaction for the defeat suffered shone forth in Count Stormhjelm's person.

The Professorskan therefore began thoroughly to consider what course of action would be wisest under the circumstances. "Has the Baron any proofs? No. The words of a dying person are of little account; consequently I need not, *never shall acknowledge her* as a relative." The Professorskan was positive on this point. She had now taken her resolution, and the Baron could as easily have induced the earth to stand still, as Fru von Krug to swerve from a decision. But still she was willing to make a little compromise, if the Baron should be provided with legal documents which would enable him to strengthen his assertions.

After she had arrived at this definite view of the matter, she again appeared in the family circle. It was the second afternoon after the Baron's visit. The Professorskan had just written a few lines to him, containing her ultimatum in regard to Minna, in which she maintained her assertion that all he had said was a complete fabrication. She asked the Majorskan to send the letter to Stjernbro by a messenger.

The ladies were collected around a work-table under the large lindens on the lawn. The Professorskan condescended to make some remarks about the irregularity of Jenny's life, so utterly unlike the order she established in her own house, and mentioned besides various other things which she found improper in her brother's family. The Majorskan listened smilingly without replying to these strictures. Jenny and Albertine conversed in a low tone, while Arvid quite humbly held a skein of silk for his gracious aunt, and every now and then cast a glance full of melancholy at Albertine. While they sat there *en famille*, as the Professorskan would have expressed herself, the gates opened for a man on horseback. It was Count Erik Stormhjelm.

At the sight of him Albertine turned pale, and bent lower over her work.

When the Count perceived that the ladies were gathered under the trees, he checked his horse, jumped from the saddle, and, throwing the reins to a servant, advanced with extreme politeness. The Majorskan welcomed him kindly, the Professorskan affably, Jenny heartily, Arvid with an enraged look, and Albertine, finally, with an icy coldness. When she offered him her hand he could easily conclude from the proud and decided bend of the head that she was fully prepared for resistance, for a courageous and stubborn resistance. But the look he gave her did not express less firmness; it contained something indomitable, which led Albertine to fear the most.

They talked awhile about the ball, about the neighbors and indifferent things, while they partook of refreshments. The Count had all this time addressed his conversation exclusively to the two married ladies. Finally, when the Majorskan was obliged to leave, on account of some household matters, the Count said to the Professorskan, —

"May I beg the favor of a few minutes' private interview with your Grace?"

"With pleasure!" The Professorskan rose and took the arm he offered her,

after which they both walked down the large avenue to the pavilion.

Albertine raised her head and followed them with her eyes. The whole expression of the young girl's face was at once resolute and yet full of anguish. She was extremely pale.

"Albertine, are you ill?" asked Jenny, seizing her hand cordially. "What is the matter with you?"

"With me?" stammered Albertine, and passed her hand over her brow as if to drive away all the pangs which tortured her; "nothing is the matter with me."

A question trembled upon Jenny's lips, but she suddenly remembered her mother's words that any question is unnecessary to one who wishes to speak confidentially, and in all other cases evinces an improper curiosity. She was silent a moment and then resumed, —

"If you desire, we will take a little walk. You do not look well and most assuredly need a little exercise. There are Ernst and the Doctor; I will go in for our hats, and then we will take a turn in the park with the gentlemen."

Albertine pressed her hand gratefully, and Jenny ran in.

"I heard from mamma that Count Stormhjelm was here, but what has become of him?" asked Ernst.

"Mamma and he have gone to the pavilion," answered Albertine, fixing her eyes on the Doctor, who at these words changed color slightly.

"He is paying his court to her, I think," said Ernst, with a smile. Again Albertine and the Doctor exchanged a glance.

"Perhaps it concerns you, and the Count wishes to assure himself of the mother's favor, in order to be more certain of winning the daughter's."

"Then he miscalculates," answered Albertine, decidedly; "my favor he never will gain."

"But possibly your hand! Just think of the rich and high-born Count Stormhjelm, who is, besides, a young, handsome, and attractive man! Would you have the heart to give him the mitten, and lose the chance of becoming a Countess?"

"Most assuredly! If I ever marry, it will be neither for rank nor wealth, but it must be from inclination."

"My beautiful cousin, you are wonderfully independent, but who knows whether you would be as strong in the decisive moment?"

"Ah! rely upon it, I am stronger than any one thinks," and Albertine's eyes expressed true strength of soul.

Jenny's arrival broke off the conversation, and in a short time they were walking in the park.

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In the mean time the Count had urged his suit, and that too in perfect accordance with all conventional requirements; little or nothing was said about the heart's voice; he spoke of it with all possible moderation. The Count knew more than well that the Professorskan did not belong to those who cared very much for the claims of the heart. The haughty mother, who from her daughter's birth had made it the aim of her life to gain a position among the upper aristocracy through this daughter, gave him her consent unconditionally, and promised him her daughter's hand, as if she had only concluded a purchase or some other business affair. When the Count received the mother's promise he said, —

"However happy your Grace's consent makes me, I still fear that it will not be confirmed by the Fröken. She has shown me such obvious coldness that I can scarcely entertain the daring hope of being able to win her sanction to my heart's warmest desires. This fear has induced me to turn in the first place to you, whom I regard as a most excellent

mother. Besides, I am fully convinced that your daughter's respect and reverence for your will are so great that she must think as you do in all things."

"And you are perfectly right; my daughter will comply with my will in *every respect*. You have my promise, my intended son-in-law! And now you can be secure."

"But if the Fröken has already given away her heart, then all hope is over for me."

"We do not live in the world of romance, but of reality, and there, God be praised! those foolish imaginations about heart and feelings which in times past exerted such an influence disappear more and more. Besides, my daughter is so well brought up and has such a high idea of the obedience she owes me that it cannot possibly enter her mind to offer any objection when *I* have made for her a proper choice. To-morrow I will talk to Albertine."

"And when may I come again?"

"To-morrow afternoon."

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When the young people returned from their walk, Albertine found her mother in the parlor, with a brow upon which was enthroned a higher degree of pride than usual. From her appearance Albertine concluded that she had already given her consent. She felt a shudder at the thought of the stormy scenes which would now ensue. She met with her soul's glance the whole series of cold and hard persecutions by which her mother would try to bend her to her inflexible will, and she knew that the conflict would be terrible. But the harder it became, the more steadfastly she endured it, the closer it would bring her to Richard, the sooner would they be united. Albertine had a truly heroic spirit. While she calculated beforehand all that was before her, she realized that she must stand alone in the contest, and that it was her duty in the mean time to procure Minna a shelter, a place, so that she should not become the victim upon which her mother's anger could exhaust itself.

After the Count had ridden away, and they were all to separate for the night, Albertine approached Jenny and asked her to come to her room before she retired; which Jenny promised, although somewhat surprised at this familiar invitation from her cousin. As soon as Albertine had entered her room, Jenny presented herself there; but we will leave the girls to themselves.

The Professorskan was making her night-toilet with Martha's asistance.

"We shall probably leave this place in about two weeks," said Fru von Krug to her faithful servant.

"That is a good thing, your Grace." Martha sighed and looked sanctimonious.

"What do you mean!" Her Grace knew by the tone of her voice, that Martha had something on her mind.

"Ah! there are queer reports going round; and, besides, things appear so strange, that a faithful old servant, like me, has hard work to keep still and swallow all the mean stories."

"Speak out, Martha. Has any one dared to speak disrespectfully of me?" Her Grace raised her head.

"No! God preserve us! but you see the Fröken —"

"Well, what of her?"

"I verily do not know whether I dare to tell you what I have heard, and what I believe I have seen myself."

"I should think that you exposed yourself more by keeping silent. Speak! I command it."

"Well, the fact is, that they say the Fröken, in company with Ma'mselle Minna, has all summer, early in the morning, had meetings with —"

"With whom?" Her Grace was darkred with anger.

"With Doctor Bergström."

"You lie, Martha!" shrieked the Professorskan, and sat up in bed.

"If I lie, then the forester lies, from whom I have heard it all; and, besides, I can solemnly assure your Grace, that I myself with my own ears heard the Fröken, the day of the ball, call the Doctor 'Richard.' I could not hear what she further said to him because I stood on the steps and was obliged to draw back, for fear that she would see me."

"Go! that is enough!"

"Your Grace is not angry with me?"

"No! but I will believe that you are mistaken; do you understand?"

"Yes!"

"My daughter is going to marry Count Stormhjelm."

Martha courtesied and left the room. When her Grace was alone, she remained sitting upright in bed, with an expression of face which would almost have frightened a stout-hearted man. She passed her hand slowly over her pale brow and muttered to herself, —

"Aha, Ma'mselle Minna! you accompany my daughter to secret meetings! you are cognizant of a low love-affair! It was not sufficient that I detested you for the disgrace your father occasioned my family, I must also detest you on my own account; this you shall pay dearly for. The Baron's intercession will now avail you little. Besides, what have I to do with the Baron? But Minna — Minna — whom I have only kept, clothed, and fed from fear, — she — she shall soon have the punishment she deserves.

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Not until midnight did Jenny leave Albertine; and when she rose to go, she said with deep emotion, as she pressed her cousin's hand, —

"Rely upon me, Minna shall have a home here at Rönby. I know papa's heart, and that he helps where he can."

"Thank you, Jenny, a thousand times! My heart would have bled if I had been compelled to think that Minna, my childhood's friend, my companion both in joy and grief, should on my account have been driven out into the world among strangers."

The following morning Jenny stole quite silently down the stairs and asked in the kitchen, —

"Is the Major up yet?"

"Yes; he is in his room."

Jenny boldly opened the door of her father's apartment and walked fearlessly in.

The Major sat at a table, with his head leaning in his hand, and his gaze fastened on a note that he had just received.

"Good morning, dear papa," said Jenny, going to him.

"Is it you, my girl? Good morning, dear child; up already, merry and cheerful, as I see!" The father's clouded brow cleared at the sight of his daughter, and he passed his hand caressingly over the light silky hair.

"You looked so troubled when I came in; has anything happened?"

"I have received a singular note from the Baron, which brought my thoughts upon a person long since deceased."

"Who is that?"

"My younger sister who died quite young."

"Yes; I have heard you mention that she was very beautiful."

"And very good. God knows where she got it from, for Sophie and I do not exactly belong to the tender-hearted ones."

"But still you are much more so than Aunt Sophie!"

"Yes! I believe, by my honor, that you are right. She would have made a capital landed-proprietor in Russia, with the knout as her symbol of power."

"I am of the same opinion, dearest papa, but I have not yet learned what good things Fritz of Stjernboro wrote."

"Read yourself."

Jenny read:—

"HERR MAJOR: Ask the Professorskan what fate your younger sister finally met with; still not in my name, but your own. I know positively that the Professorskan can give necessary information about it. The reason why I desire you to make this inquiry I will explain verbally by and by.

"Now, as ever, your devoted

FRITZ SILFVERKRONA."

"That does not tell us very much. But do you, then, not know your sister's fate?"

"No! It is about nineteen years since she died, and I was then abroad. You know that after a violent inflammation of the lungs, I was obliged to seek a warmer climate, and remained there a year. During this time Charlotte died. When I came home, people talked about a fancy that she had had; it was even asserted that she had been married, but when I wrote about it and asked Sophie, in whose house Charlotte had stayed ever since Sophie's marriage, I received, as an answer, that the whole thing was an utterly groundless report. Charlotte, two years before her death, had been obliged to go to Copenhagen for her health. On her return to Stockholm she was very weak and died after a six months' stay in that capital."

"Well, then you know all about it."

"So it seems; but I have been told by two friends, who at that time visited at Sophie's house, that these accounts were not true, but that Charlotte had secretly left her sister and gone to Copenhagen with a person whom she loved and whom the sister did not wish to acknowledge as a suitor, because his position in life did not correspond to her demands. You know that Sophie and I have been enemies for several years, and that is the reason why I did not make any further inquiries concerning Charlotte. She was dead, and what did it avail to touch so painful a matter? Nineteen years have elapsed since then, but as the memory of the departed is again awakened in my soul, I shall, forsooth, so put it to Sister Sophie that she will be forced to tell me the truth."

"That happens just right, for I also have something to ask with regard to Aunt Sophie. You see, papa, the young girl Minna, whom aunt brought here, seems to be exceedingly disliked by her, while Minna, on the contrary, who has no relative in the whole world, is attached to Albertine with a devotion which makes her rather endure all aunt's hardness than separate from Albertine and go out among strangers. Now Albertine has begged me to ask you if Minna could not have a place with us, because in all probability aunt will dismiss Minna as soon as they arrive in the city, and the poor girl will then be entirely homeless, with no resource for the future but to seek a suitable place at the intelligence-office. Albertine wept so bitterly at the thought that her friend and playmate should be shoved out into the world in that way without shelter or protection. Dear, beloved papa, let me take Minna! She will help us sew, and you know how much mamma needs a little more help than mine, especially at Christmas when your Jenny and her mamma have so much to do. O papa, do not say no! As for what Minna may cost, she will certainly make up for it with her work, and I will no longer have any spending money, but will resign it totally if I can only take Minna!"

Jenny had put her arm around her father's neck, and looked him so beseechingly in the eyes while she patted and caressed his cheek.

"But, dear Jenny, I cannot bind myself to keep that Minna for a lifetime," said the father half-smiling.

"Ah no! only until mamma and I can procure her a respectable place, and she has had time to learn something, particularly what is required in the country. Perhaps we shall be so well satisfied that we cannot do without her."

"Have you spoken with mamma?"

"No, papa; I wished to have your consent first. I am just as sure of mamma as if I had already consulted her."

"I have no doubt of it. Your mother has completely spoiled you.

"Has she? Do you really think so?" said Jenny, looking smilingly at her father. "If that is the case, you have faithfully assisted her.—Well, papa, do you say yes?"

"You little goose, you do with me just as you please; you may take that Minna, but on one condition."

The Major looked seriously at his daughter.

"And that is?"

"Give me your hand upon it that you will make no objections and agree unconditionally."

"Here is my hand, although I do not know the condition; but I feel sure that what you do, my own papa, will always be good and beneficial."

"Bravely said. Now listen! I will not hear of your allowance being stopped, but I will give you half as much again, so that you can without inconvenience share it with Minna. You see, this was my condition," said the Major, laughing.

"Ah, you good, you magnanimous papa!" exclaimed Jenny with emotion, as she smiled at her father with tears in her eyes.

Just then the door opened and the Majorskan entered.

"Mother, you have brought up a truly dangerous woman in this ugly little young one. She is an artful piece, who does just as she has a mind to with your husband."

He kissed Jenny on the brow and reached his hand to the Majorskan, adding with a warm glance at the latter, —

"*As the mother is, so will the daughter be.*"

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The Professorskan had thoroughly considered how she ought to act. She had finally come to the conclusion that Martha's whole story about the Doctor was a complete mistake. Martha had not understood matters. She, the Professorskan, felt convinced that it was not Albertine who had appointed meetings with the Doctor, but Minna. No! it could not be her daughter who had forgotten herself so far as to love a man of such low origin. The Fröken von Krug had too much regard for her own dignity, and for that which was proper in one of noble birth. It was not possible, after the education the Professorskan had given her daughter, that she could so forget the teachings inculcated from childhood. In short, it must be an impossibility; and in any event, her Grace considered it wisest not to mention the affair to her daughter, but let Minna alone bear the whole blame of it, whether she was guilty or not.

Even if Albertine had actually degraded herself so far as to fall in love with a gardener's son, as Martha asserted and the Professorskan denied, she would still never dare to acknowledge such a thing to her mother. And with this supposition, it would be fine policy, in any case, to let Minna pass for the guilty party and thus have a good reason for driving her from the house.

When the Professorskan was dressed she sent word to Albertine to come down to the pavilion after breakfast, as she desired to talk with her. The Professorskan had chosen the pavilion so that no ears could listen to her conversation with her daughter.

On entering the pavilion Albertine

found her mother sitting on the sofa with an unusually mild aspect.

"I have sent for you to come here because I have something important to say, which I did not wish any one to overhear. Up there the rooms open into each other, so that one is always exposed to the undue curiosity of the next-door neighbor. Take a seat! What I have to communicate to you is of such a nature that one cannot very well listen to it standing."

Albertine seated herself.

"From your earliest childhood I have always desired to make for you a suitable choice of a husband. With the education you had received, the principles you had imbibed, and the class in society to which you belonged, I had every reason to count upon a son-in-law who stood high above the multitude both in birth and property. I wished to see my only daughter married to a man who could do honor to me and give lustre to our name. You find that I have thought of your future like a wise and considerate mother." The Professorskan held up, as if to give Albertine an opportunity to respond with some expression of gratitude for her motherly kindness; but the daughter remained silent. Only a mute bend of the head gave indication that she had heard the pompous introduction to what her mother had to say. The Professorskan resumed, —

"I have now at length found a man who, through his youth, his repute, his culture, and above all his rank and property, is a suitable son-in-law for me, and just such a husband as I have desired for you. He has asked me for your hand, in your behalf and my own. Need I tell you who it is?"

"If you will be so kind."

"And you have not even guessed who is to be your future husband?"

"No! at least not whom you have chosen."

"It is Count Stormhjelm. He is coming here this afternoon, to greet you as his *fiancée*, and to be presented to your relatives as your betrothed. At our arrival in the city you will exchange rings, and the betrothal will be solemnly announced. Next spring the wedding will be celebrated. Such is my will!"

"It pains me to be compelled to oppose this will, but Count Stormhjelm can *never become my husband.*"

"And why not?" The Professorskan erected her head, and gave her daughter a sharp glance.

"Because I do not love him," answered Albertine, calmly.

"Where did you get those antiquated ideas? Probably in some of the romances that you have read in defiance of my commands. But I thought I had taught you that I was not one of those who allow themselves to be led blindly by fancy. Besides, did you not hear me say, 'The Count has *my promise;* it is *my will* that you become his wife'?"

"All this I have both heard and understood, mamma. But with all respect for your declared will, I cannot in this instance comply with it. I shall never become Count Stormhjelm's wife."

"Not even if I command you?" The Professorskan rose and remained standing, with her hand resting on the table.

"Not even then."

"But if I force you?"

"I shall not allow myself to be forced. I have taken a solemn oath only to belong to the man I love, and the Count I cannot even respect, still less love."

"Before whom have you taken this oath? Not before me at least." The Professorskan took a step towards her daughter.

"I have taken it before God."

"No more declamations! Listen instead to what I have to tell you: you *shall* marry the Count; this is my irrevocable will, my unalterable decision. All your resistance is of no avail. When I have decided a thing, it must be done; in one way or another I accomplish my

will, — that you know. To contend with me is of no use, for you will finally be forced to yield. You hear that I speak with perfect calmness, with all possible consideration, for I need only utter one word to bring you, crushed with shame, to my feet. But I have been merciful, I have as a mother tried to conquer you, and I now expect that you as a daughter, from gratitude for my goodness, will voluntarily comply with my desire, especially as this desire only aims at your own welfare, your marriage with a rich and high-born man."

"For your endeavor to make me happy I shall always feel deeply grateful. But the happiness you offer is no happiness for me. I do not value inherited advantages, and I find no joy in wealth. Moreover, the man you have chosen as my companion through life I despise and reject. He is a man without honor or feeling, and without heart. For only a man without honor can request the hand of a girl who has herself declared to him that she will *never* unite her fate with his; and this, mamma, — this I have once openly told Count Stormhjelm."

"Albertine, beware!" The Professorskan's hand closed tightly around her daughter's arm. "You have thus *dared* to refuse the Count's offer?"

"Yes! and so long as my lips are able to speak, I shall steadily repulse him."

"Ah! you think, perverse child, that through your obstinacy you will succeed in making me desist from my resolution, but you are cruelly mistaken. You have not been willing to do as I wish. Well then! answer me, Fröken von Krug, what degrading connection is that which has given occasion to your secret meetings by the forester's cottage? Ah! the color on your cheek is a terrible evidence against you. You have then dared to love a man for whom your own pride ought to make you blush, whose name neither you nor I ought to be able to utter without shame. You are deeply corrupted if you can cherish love for a base-born fellow whom you must in any case deny before the world as unworthy of you."

At the beginning of her mother's attack Albertine's cheeks and brow had been overspread with a deep flush; at the close of it they had become deadly pale. With an icy glance and smothered voice she rejoined: —

"Who can assert that Doctor Bergström is unworthy of me? What girl would need to blush because she loves a man so elevated, so noble, so gifted, and so above the multitude in all respects as he? It is not I, at least."

"Unfortunate creature!" exclaimed the Professorskan, seizing Albertine by both arms; "what is that you dare to say to me, your mother?"

"Only the truth. It is indeed a language which I, alas! have not before dared to use to my mother; but from this day I have overcome my fear, and shall henceforth never avail myself of any other. You ask me what connection I have entered into by the forester's cottage. None, for I had already three years ago promised my heart and my hand to the Doctor. Our meetings here have only proceeded from the need of mutual interchange which is born with love. To blush over this feeling of mine can never enter my mind; I am, on the contrary, proud of it."

The Professorskan had dropped her daughter's arms and now stood before her with her own crossed upon her breast. She had let her daughter speak without interrupting her with a single word of anger; but it appeared as if each and every one of Albertine's words petrified the stern face, and when she finished, it would have been hard for one to believe that the Professorskan was a living being, had not the penetrating eyes, with their sharp, threatening expression, rested steadily on the daughter. Although Albertine had many rea-

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ollections of this harsh and unrelenting aspect of her mother's face, she could not remember her as she now appeared. The young girl felt that when these thin and colorless lips opened, they would utter something terrible. She could have sunk at her mother's feet, embraced her knees, and sued for mercy, but yet she remained standing upright, because she realized that prayers would here be without effect. After a long pause the Professorskan said in her hard and implacable tone: —

"I have imposed it upon myself, as a duty, to listen calmly to this disgraceful confession, but I have preserved every word of it in my memory, so as never to forget the height of your shamelessness to your mother. Now hear, and preserve my words in your turn: my consent to your union with my servant's son you will never obtain; but I am besides strong enough as a mother to reject, despise, and even curse my daughter if she should bind herself irrevocably to such a degrading attachment. I should be able to drive her from my house without mercy, to abandon her to public contempt, and until my death deny her as a daughter. Your confession has only made my resolution in regard to the Count still firmer, and in order to spare both you and myself all further scenes, I will only mention briefly that your marriage shall be duly solemnized within four months. Do not dare to show the Count any ill will! If I perceive it, I will accuse the Doctor quite openly before my brother, as a man that has infringed the laws of hospitality and honor; for he has through a criminal and forbidden love exposed your name and reputation to slander. You have now heard my will." The Professorskan walked slowly towards the door.

Albertine stood motionless. When she at length found herself alone, she sank annihilated into a chair. But no violent sobs, no wild complaint, passed her lips; only a few large tears fell slowly down on her clasped hands. She sat long immersed in her despair, — for despair is the right name for the grief which devastated her soul. Finally she raised her bowed head, cast a glance around the room, and when her eyes fell on a little writing-desk, she rose and went to it. She wrote: —

"RICHARD! She knows all, — she has threatened me with her curse in case my heart remains faithful to you. She has decided that my marriage with Count Stormhjelm shall take place in four months. I never believed that she could be so terrible. It only remains for me to die. But in death I will remain your faithful ALBERTINE."

She folded the letter and concealed it in her pocket; then, at the sound of the dinner-bell, with a crushed heart and pallid cheeks, she took her way to the main building to arrange her dress for dinner.

Minna regarded her with anxious looks as she assisted her.

"Minna," said Albertine finally, with a mild and sorrowful voice, "between mamma and me a hard strife has commenced; it concerns Richard. She knows all. I shall never have courage to endure this struggle so long as I am obliged to fear at every scene that you will become the sufferer from it. We must therefore separate for some time, my dear darling Minna! Do not weep, do not look so despairing, for your grief only increases my torment. Be strong, Minna, strong for my sake, and believe me, the welfare of us both demands this step. Instead of being forced by my mother to leave me, you will now bid farewell to her yourself, for you are to stay here with my aunt and Jenny, until we can once more be united."

Minna had sunk down on a chair, with her face hid in her hands. She wept violently, but without uttering a

word of complaint. Albertine put her arm around her neck, and some tears fell from her eyes also, when she whispered,—

"Minna, my dear child, do not weep! With it all you can never be so unhappy as I am."

Minna looked up in Albertine's face, and read but too plainly all the grief that dwelt in the young girl's breast. She seized her hands and covered them with kisses, while she sobbingly faltered,—

"O dear one! I ought not to increase your misery. Ah, Albertine! do with me all that you desire, my life belongs to you, and I shall without complaint, without a sigh, comply with your will."

The two young girls embraced each other tenderly.

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At the dinner-table, when the Doctor, as usual, had his place beside Albertine, she succeeded in stealing the little note into his hand without her mother's perceiving it. When they rose from the table, Jenny took Albertine's arm and walked with her into the garden. The Doctor and the Majorskan were engaged in an earnest conversation, and the Major had seated himself on the sofa in the parlor, beside his sister.

"You have now been here over two months, dear Sophie, and yet I can scarcely say that we have spoken four words together. We ought, however, as a brother and a sister who have been separated for over twenty years, to have much to say to each other."

"It ought to be so, my dear Gustaf, but it is not my fault that we have been separated. I was not the one who occasioned the break between us."

"Certainly it was you, with your stupid pride and your crazy ideas. Do you think that there is any sensible person who pays respect to such fancies? No, not one! You are, my dear sister, a whole century behind your time. But leave that. You have besides been wrong, because you tried to meddle in my choice of a wife; but this I have forgiven, therefore it is not worth while to speak of it. I am an enviably happy married man; I have children who give me joy, and a wife of whom I can be proud. I should be very much rejoiced if Brother-in-law Krug could say of you what I have said about my wife, but I greatly doubt it."

"Is it your intention to insult me?" asked the Professorskan, straightening herself up.

"Not at all; but you can certainly bear to hear the truth from your only brother, and it is not worth while for you to behave so proudly, for such airs have no effect upon me. Neither is it of any use for us to get angry with each other. It would be better to part amicably, especially as I have avoided all conversation, so as not to fall into any feud with you."

"You are too polite," answered the Professorskan, scornfully.

"Yes, by my honor, more polite than you had reason to expect; but once more, let us leave this subject. I desired particularly to hear something definite about Charlotte's fate and death. You must excuse me, but your answers to my questions nineteen years ago were all rather superficial and scarcely satisfactory. I now wish to know with whom she went to Copenhagen, according to the story, and also your reasons for preventing her marriage with that fellow."

The Major's eyes rested on his sister with a penetrating expression. He observed a violent contraction of the brow, a hasty compression of the lips, and a slight change of color, — all the reflection of an emotion which the Professorskan in spite of her efforts could not restrain.

"All those stories are entirely strange to me," replied she. "All that I know is that Charlotte was advised by our family physician to consult the most distinguished practitioner in Copenhagen. She

went, was gone a year, returned considerably worse, and died after a six months' steady decline."

"At your home?"

"No; Albertine was just at that time to see the light, and I myself was so weak that Charlotte could not possibly receive the care she needed with me; so I confided her to the charge of one of my acquaintances."

"Who was that?"

"Ah! she is dead now."

"But I would like to know the name of that friend."

The Major raised his voice, and from the swollen veins in his brow one could see that his anger was on the point of breaking out.

"What does this examination mean?" exclaimed the Professorskan, hastily. "Our sister has been dead for nineteen years, and this is surely all that you need to know. Besides, I do not intend to submit to any further inquisitorial questions."

"Ah! indeed, you do not wish to give me all the information I desire. Well then, upon my faith and honor, I shall procure it for myself. I will go to Stockholm to-morrow, and institute the most thorough inquiries. You seem to regard me as another Von Krug, but you ought to remember that I am of the same blood, even if mine is a little better, a little sounder than yours. When I mean anything, I mean it in full earnest, and now I mean to find out the circumstances of Charlotte's death, and shall do so, even if I am obliged to employ years of my life for it."

The Major had risen.

"See here, Gustaf, do you wish to make scandal? Do you wish to expose me through these inquiries, or what is your design?"

"I wish to know the truth. If I cannot ascertain it without scandal, scandal there must be. But I swear by my honor that I shall sooner or later get at the bottom of this story."

"But you will place me in a dubious light."

"It can't be helped. You have heard my word."

The Major left the room, and the Professorskan remained sitting with clouded brow and tightly closed lips. Count Stormhjelm's arrival roused her from her reflections; but when she discovered the Baron behind him, she changed color slightly.

The Baron said, as he greeted her, —

"Your Grace is then inflexible?"

"I think that I have expressed my mind plainly enough in the letter I sent you, Herr Baron, and hope that no further words are necessary in the matter."

The Baron bowed in silence and withdrew. He went to look up the Major, and had with him a long private conversation. The Count and the Professorskan remained a moment alone.

"What hope does your Grace give me?"

"You have my word, and I never break a promise."

"But the Fröken?"

"Shall obey. On our arrival at the city the betrothal will be celebrated. Are you satisfied with this, my intended son-in-law? We leave here in about eight days."

The Count kissed the thin white hand, and whispered some words of gratitude. When he went to seek Albertine the young people were gathered under the lindens on the lawn. At the Count's approach Arvid started up from his seat and left the company abruptly.

Towards evening, when they were all to take a little walk, the Count offered Albertine his arm. He allowed the others to have a considerable start, so that the words he and Albertine exchanged should not be overheard.

"Your mother, Fröken Albertine, has been pleased to tell me that you have given your consent to our union."

The Count's gaze rested upon Albertine with all the expression he could give it.

"You are mistaken, Count Stormhjelm! My mother could not tell you any such thing. I have refused your offer in just as decided terms to mamma as to you. You have probably misunderstood her."

"No, my Fröken; she said, 'You have *my promise* and I never break it.' She asserted further about you, '*She shall obey.*'"

"Assume for a moment that she was right when she said that *I should obey.* Would you actually wish to have for your wife a woman who only gave you her hand from obedience?"

"Yes! if, as now, I could not obtain her in any other way."

"You would then be willing to drag a bride to the altar who did not love, who perhaps detested you, and who was forced to become your wife only by her mother's authority?"

"Yes, my Fröken! When I love, I have only one endeavor, one aim, which I seek to reach, and this aim is to come into possession of the one I love. If she opposes my love with aversion, then she goads this love to madness. What was originally a tender and glowing ecstasy for the heart and imagination becomes through resistance a wild, stormy desire, which must be satisfied, cost what it will. It becomes a matter of honor to try to be master of the woman who has once rejected me, for my self-love, deeply wounded at seeing another preferred to me, is compelled to revenge itself notwithstanding her hatred, aversion, and contempt. My victory will be to possess her, in spite of all resistance; and if she is once *mine,* I will soon teach her to love me. There is in woman's nature a latent inclination to forgive all acts which are committed in the endeavor to win her; and hate itself passes over to love when she is forced to admire the strength of character in the man who does not shun any means to attain his happiness."

"You deceive yourself! The women who from hate pass over to love have hated in imagination and will also love in imagination; but one who, like me, has full reason to despise you will never love you. What domestic happiness can you hope for at the side of a wife whose heart can never forgive you the barbarous cruelty with which you forced her to perjure herself before God and humanity? Do you think that she will ever seek her happiness with you? No! she will as a wife avoid you. She has sworn a false oath, and it consequently becomes impossible for her to think of her duties with respect. In the sight of her conscience she does not consider herself bound to this man who has gained her hand by compulsion; she becomes a careless and delinquent wife, for which she cannot justly be reproached. What right have you to her faithfulness, her love, when you have forced her to become your wife? I feel within me that if I were weak enough to allow myself to be forced by a domineering mother into a union with you, I should with hate in my heart trample upon my duties and take revenge by dragging your proud name in the dust. I know that if I were tied to a man whom I despised, I should be changed into a fury, who would not hesitate at anything that would draw disgrace upon the man whom I hated and detested."

Albertine had spoken with an expression, a life, which gave a formidable stamp of truth to every word she uttered.

"Not even this terrible picture can induce me to give up your hand. My Fröken, only towards a weak and cowardly man dare a wife appear such as you have represented. I am neither weak nor cowardly. I am a man hard to conquer, and should be a husband im-

possible to change, for I should master you, if not by love, at least by fear. And even should my life at your side become a hell upon earth, the lot is cast, — you must become mine."

"I will never be yours. No one can ever force me to give you my hand."

"Then you intend to defy your mother's will?"

"No, but I intend to oppose it."

"Perhaps through an open scandal, which she will never forgive."

"No, Herr Count, but I shall know how to defend my rights."

"Say, rather, the *Doctor's* rights. Beware, Albertine! Your honor rests in my hands; a word from me, and you are thrust from the social circle in which you live, branded before the world as a girl who by a criminal love-intrigue has stained her good name and reputation; finally, prostrated in the dust of public contempt, you will become an object of aversion even to your husband, who is forced to share your disgrace. Under such circumstances, my Fröken, I think that Count Stormhjelm's name is by no means to be despised."

Albertine remained silent. She was conscious that appearances were against her; she realized that she was still too much alone to bid defiance both to her mother and to the Count. The latter continued: —

"You cannot blame me for having used my weapons, still less for abusing them; for then I should simply have said to your mother, 'Madam, your daughter has exposed her reputation, but, notwithstanding that, I offer her my hand and my heart. I love her deeply enough not to mind her forgetfulness of what the world and you have the right to require.' But I said nothing of all this, and have consequently not betrayed your secret. I mention this circumstance only to show you what means I might have employed if I had been ignoble and selfish."

Albertine threw her head back proudly, and said, —

"I do not desire your consideration, for I have never committed any act for which I need to blush. The proof of this is that I have openly acknowledged to my mother that Doctor Bergström has the promise of my hand and my heart."

"And she approved of your sacrificing a Stormhjelm for a Bergström? Albertine! all your resistance is in vain, for by the God who sees us, I swear that you never shall belong to any one but me."

"The future will make you a perjurer."

"What interesting things are you talking about?" cried the Major, turning round to the Count and Albertine. These words forced them to hasten their steps.

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The next morning, just as her Grace had finished drinking coffee, some one entered the outer room and seemed, to judge from the sound, to go straight through it towards the inner one. Somewhat surprised, the Professorskan looked at the door, and at the same instant the Major stepped in.

"What brought you here, dear Gustaf?"

"The desire to continue the conversation which we interrupted yesterday. See here, Sophie, to whom was Charlotte married?"

"Again that old story; I fancied that I answered it yesterday."

"So she was not married?"

"I know that I have never had a brother-in-law."

"Not even the music-teacher, Ekeberg?" exclaimed the Major.

"No! Herr Ekeberg I have never acknowledged and shall never acknowledge as my brother-in-law."

"He was, nevertheless, married to Charlotte Qvickfelt. Here is the proof

of it." The Major threw a paper on the table. "But now it remains yet to learn, where is Charlotte's daughter to be found, who was born the 12th of May, 18—? Shortly after the child's birth the mother died, after she had confided the new-born babe to your care."

"I do not know. Charlotte had cast a lasting disgrace upon me, and I ceased to count myself a relative of hers."

"But I have not; therefore I ask you, what have you done with the child she left behind her?"

The Professorskan made no reply.

"Do you wish me to tell you?"

"Certainly, if you know."

"You have brought up this girl as a maid for your daughter; you have given out that she is the daughter of Albertine's nurse."

"Well, if that is so, where is the poor child to be found?"

"Here in my house; it is — Minna!"

"Prove, if you can that this servant-girl is my niece!"

"I can do so." The Major took out two letters. One was to Charlotte's sister-in-law, in which the Professorskan declared that she would adopt and take care of the child on the condition that the relationship in which she, Ekeberg's sister, stood to the departed should remain a secret to all. The other letter was addressed to Albertine's nurse, and contained an agreement to pay fifty-six thalers a year, provided she was willing to let the child the Professorskan intrusted to her charge pass for her own; if she revealed to any one that the child was not hers the annuity would cease. In addition, the Major produced a third letter, also written to Ekeberg's sister, and comprising an unsatisfactory answer to some inquiries made about the child. This letter contained the following words, —

"You can be perfectly calm. My sister's child lives in my house and is brought up with my daughter; but on the strength of your promise, I beg to be excused for the future from all further inquiries.

"Sophie von Krug."

The Professorskan turned pale at the sight of this last letter; but, without losing anything of her confident bearing, she said, —

"It seems to me that I have fulfilled my duty in all respects when I have thus taken care of that child."

"See here, Fru sister! Have you been a mother to your niece? have you given her the same education as you have given your own daughter?"

"No! she was not by her birth entitled to it."

"Indeed! And the reason?" The Major looked at his sister with eyes as penetrating as her own. "Is she then an illegitimate child, or what the devil do you mean?"

"Her father was of so simple an origin that we were not willing to recognize her. I should then have been obliged to acknowledge relationship with the wife of a carpenter's apprentice, Ekeberg's sister."

"Well, what then? was Ekeberg an honest man or not?"

"All that I know of that person is that he instructed my son in music. But now I desire to know where you got those papers from, for Ekeberg's sister is dead, and Albertine's nurse likewise?"

"From Baron Silfverkrona. Do you know, Sophie, I wish with all my heart that the Lord might stab your pride right seriously for once, and punish it as it deserves. You will now, by my soul, have to make the best of it, for I think of acknowledging Chambermaid Minna as my niece before the whole world, and all her father's relatives as mine!" The Major was going to leave the room.

"Gustaf, I hope you do not mean to

endanger my plans for the future by such an act, which might entirely break up the match just decided between my daughter and Count Stormhjelm. What do you suppose he would think of such family connections? In short, my dear Gustaf, you cannot wish to abuse hospitality to that extent, first to insult me, and then destroy my daughter's future happiness."

"I shall do what is before me without regard to your lordly favorite. Consequently Minna shall instantly be acknowledged as my sister's lawful daughter. It makes me furious when I think of your behavior towards the child. If all the counts in the world, and all the rest of the nobility were here, it should be done. I owe the poor wronged child this reparation."

"I shall leave in a day or two, Gustaf! Wait at least until then."

"No! not a minute will I wait."

The Major went out and slammed the door violently. Outside it he ran against Martha, who held a letter in her hand. She went in and delivered it to the Professorskan. It was from the Count and contained the following:—

"My gracious Fru Professorskan: My conversation with Fröken Albertine gave me so little hope that I verily do not know how to regard my position. I know that I should be ready to submit to anything whatsoever rather than renounce the happiness I anticipated at Fröken Albertine's side. Forgive me, therefore, if I express my fear that a prolonged stay at Rönby will only redouble the difficulties which now rise up against my desires. The Fröken has a daily opportunity to nourish the singular fancy which makes her so disinclined to a union with me. Your departure would take away all hope from the person who is so bold as to lift his eyes to her. Fröken Albertine has a property to expect after her parents, considerable enough to seem like a fortune in the eyes of a poor physician. To enact a romance with a girl of her standing is always an honor for Gardener Bergström's son. (I confess that I would have been glad if the Fröken had given me a rival of somewhat nobler blood.) When your Grace is pleased to notify me of your departure, I will be ready immediately to accompany you to the city.

"With the deepest respect,

Erik Stormhjelm."

"Ah! so the Fröken defies me. Well, we will see who prevails," muttered the Professorskan, folding the letter slowly. Then she called Martha.

"Go down and look up the Doctor, and ask him to come here to me. Avoid attracting any unnecessary notice, however."

In a few moments steps were heard on the stairs, and Martha opened the door for the Doctor.

The Professorskan sat on the sofa in the inner room, with the air of a judge, who intended to examine and sentence a culprit.

The Doctor made a polite, but in no wise cringing bow to her Grace. There was something truly dignified in his whole bearing, which involuntarily made an impression even upon the Professorskan, although she was rather impervious by nature.

"Your Grace has sent for me; can I as a physician be of any service?"

"No, sir! I do not need your assistance; but I have asked you to step up here, in order that *I* might serve *you* as a physician."

"As I am perfectly well, I do not think that I am in need of any medical advice; but when a lady of your Grace's intelligence offers to officiate as a doctor, I submit in all humility to the proffered care."

The Doctor drew an easy-chair forward and seated himself; although her Grace

had not invited him by word or gesture to do so. The Professorskan felt irritated, and yet controlled by the Doctor's at once polite and unembarrassed manner.

"It is not for any physical ill that I wish to be your physician, but for a spiritual; and this ill, sir, is called hallucination, or foolish illusions."

Her Grace uttered these words in a sharp and emphatic voice.

"I assure your Grace that the two ailments in question do not trouble me. I *never* allow myself to labor under any hallucination, and even as a youth have not had any dazzling or foolish illusions."

"Enough, sir! It is not necessary for me to know what faults or merits you have or do not have; all this is entirely indifferent to me. All that I know is that *you* have dared to raise your eyes to *my daughter;* that you have succeeded in gaining her heart and perverting her ideas; and this, sir, is something which I do not intend to tolerate. By what right have you tried to win her affections?"

"By the same right that every honorable man possesses to raise his glance to a lovely young girl as soon as he finds himself in a position that will enable him to offer her his hand without pecuniary obstacles."

"Yes, *when* he is in that position; but you, Herr Bergström, do not mean to assert that your position is such that you can offer *my daughter* your hand?"

"I certainly do, madam," said the Doctor, politely, "for I have just received by post an appointment as physician of the Guards, and in this I see a good prospect of becoming independent before long."

"Verily, Herr Bergström, you are more than impudent. You, a gardener's son, even if a thousand times physician of the Guards, consider yourself entitled to propose to Fröken von Krug! I really do not know whether I ought to get angry or laugh at such a piece of presumption. But I have already wasted too many words on this ridiculous affair. You have, by your love and the secret meetings connected with it, thrown a shadow upon my daughter's honor. That is a mean, a base deed. I forbid you, therefore, to keep up any secret connection with my daughter for the future, unless —"

"Perhaps your Grace will please omit the threat," interrupted the Doctor with noble dignity. "Threats are only suitable for children, not for men. As far as I am concerned, they are wholly unnecessary, for all secret connection between Fröken Albertine and me has already ceased two weeks ago, and will not be renewed. I shall not approach her until I have the right to do so. The culpability of my conduct, in exposing Fröken Albertine's honor in some degree through my love, I have long since realized, and as far as possible have tried to remedy. The consciousness of this delinquency has been the sole cause of the punishment I have imposed upon myself, not to seek Albertine in any way, before I am in a position to do it as a suitor."

"Herr Bergström, are you really in your right mind, when you in full earnest seem to suppose that *my* daughter could become your betrothed? I understand too well that it would be very advantageous for a *Bergström* to come into possession of the property which the rich Fröken *von Krug* will bring to her husband, and also to gain an entrance into a family which through this relationship might promote his plans for the future. Not badly devised; but it is a pity that you left me out of your calculations. No! my dear sir, you must select some other object than my daughter for your interested designs. Even if you entirely overlooked your own low origin, under the influence of your ideas of equality, you ought not to have forgotten how contemptible it is for a poor man without

prospects to try to gain the hand of a wealthy girl, a girl who in all possible respects stands high above him."

To judge from appearances, the Doctor had remained entirely insensible to this attack. Not a single flash in his eyes betrayed the righteous indignation which these words ought to have excited in his breast; only some slight furrows were seen on his high forehead. With a voice entirely free from emotion, he replied, —

"No self-interest has entered into my love for Fröken Albertine; still it is futile to try to convince you of this. You are determined to view my attachment from such a stand-point, and you may do so. But I repeat once more that I have never intended to appear as a suitor to your daughter until my pecuniary position raised me above every suspicion that my choice was dictated by a paltry self-interest."

"Sir! you are actually so infatuated that you almost excite ridicule; for however brilliant prospects you may have, they will never be able to bring you a fortune equal to the one which my daughter has to expect from *her parents*. The inheritance which your father, my gardener, may leave you is not likely to be very large, as his wages with me are only four hundred thalers. Avail yourself of the little common-sense that remains to you, and realize the whole folly of your claims to my daughter's hand. For my consent to such a union she will never obtain. The day she became your wife against my will I would immediately disinherit and reject her as a child unworthy of me."

The Doctor rose, made the Professorskan a cold but polite bow, and said slowly, —

"Now since I have heard your views, it is not to you that I intend to turn, when I am once in a condition to request the Fröken's hand without being accused of self-interest. No, madam! I will turn *to one who possesses* a greater legal right to consent or refuse in this matter, — to Albertine's *father*."

"That goes too far! Not enough that you defy, you also insult me!"

"With your permission, madam, I neither have insulted nor can ever insult any one, least of all a lady. On the contrary, I believe I have manifested such deference during our conversation that I have not once transcended the moderation you have a right to require from a well-bred man. When you in memory review what has been said, you will not find a word through which I have in the least measure forgotten the respect I owed you. Do not think, however, that this has proceeded from the fact that I consider you to stand above me through your birth. No, madam, I acknowledge no other superiority than that conferred by culture and elevation of soul. And I know more than well that no one who wishes to be considered the possessor of these advantages will ever forget himself so far as to wound. It is only the rude and ignorant person, not yet able to govern his passions, who in his recklessness tramples the feelings of his fellow-beings underfoot, and mercilessly tries to humiliate."

"You seem to wish to assert that I have been guilty of something of the kind. If that is the case, sir, your improper behavior, your presumption, has given me the right."

"Allow me to end this conversation. I will never acknowledge that there is any presumption in my love, and still less do I grant any one the right to insult me. That I have patiently remained in my seat while you have made charges against my honor has been because I, the gardener's son, wished to show you, madam, how a man of culture behaves towards *a woman*, even when she forgets all that the simplest courtesy demands. And now, madam, permit me to take my leave."

"One word, that I may at once put

an end to your illusions. My daughter is to marry Count Stormhjelm within three months."

"That is to say, you will it. But Fröken Albertine, notwithstanding that, will never become Countess Stormhjelm."

"Can you now say. that you do not insult me when you assert that my daughter will refuse to obey?"

"I have only expressed my private conviction. Your daughter would be a weak, contemptible woman, destitute of self-respect, if she could step before God's altar, and swear love and fidelity to a man whom she neither loves nor respects. She will not obey her mother so slavishly. Of that I am convinced. Ah! madam, it is not blind obedience a mother ought to try to gain from her children; no, it is love, — true, sincere, and earnest love."

"Three months will determine which of us is right."

"It will not be you, madam," replied the Doctor with a bow, "for even if you succeed in forcing your daughter to a step so revolting to human feelings, you would still be wrong *in the sight of God.*" The Doctor bowed an adieu and left the room.

As soon as he had gone, the Professorskan rushed up from the sofa, and exclaimed with uncontrolled rage, as she extended her arm towards the door through which the Doctor had just disappeared, —

"*Right* or *wrong*, I will show you that over my child only *I* have sway." Then she called Martha, and ordered that everything should be made ready for their departure, which was decided to take place in two days.

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While the Major was conversing with his sister, the Majorskan had gone up to Arvid. The youth's changed behavior, his silly attempts to attract Albertine's attention, his anger whenever any one else approached her, had all been observed by the Majorskan. As the son was soon to leave home again, and as he had been the only one of the children towards whom the Professorskan had shown herself gracious, it was probable that he would visit his relatives in Stockholm during his stay in Carlberg. On account of all this, the Majorskan resolved to have a serious conversation with her son, especially as she had no suspicion as yet of her sister-in-law's sudden departure, but believed that Arvid, according to a previous decision, would travel with his aunt and cousin.

When the Majorskan entered his room, he lay at full length on the sofa, with a shawl over his breast, which she immediately recognized as Albertine's.

"Are you sick, my boy?" asked the Majorskan, going to the youth, who, at his mother's entrance, sat up directly.

"No, mother, I am perfectly well. Why did you think that I was sick?" He took his mother's hand, which she had passed gently over his brow.

"Because you, who are usually so given to roaming around the country with papa, now spend most of the time in your room. Say, my child, is anything the matter with you?"

"Ah, mother, what should be the matter with me here in this dear home, where everything speaks of your tenderness and care?"

The Majorskan had seated herself beside her son, and he leaned his dark head against her shoulder.

"But, Arvid, to spend whole hours in idle solitude is not good or beneficial. You abandon yourself to a sickly dreaming, and this has an injurious effect upon the feelings, which at your age ought to be fresh and buoyant. Fancy necessarily plays so large a rôle in youth that we ought not to give it undue nourishment, and thus call forth dangerous illusions about ourselves and others. No, my boy, you must seek your joy in a lively

activity. Only for the unoccupied, for the lazy, is time long; and these sooner or later become weary of themselves and others."

"When I get to Carlberg, I shall work," stammered Arvid. "You will see that I shall do you honor."

"I do not doubt it. If I did, Arvid, I should feel very unhappy. But, my son, although you do not think so yourself, you are not quite well."

"How can you say so, mother? I do not feel the least ill." Arvid sprang up.

The Majorskan smiled.

"So much the better. I certainly do not mean to insist that you are ill. But, from your hasty motion, I can almost guess that you feared a cup of elder-tea, with the accompanying camphor-drops. Be easy, however, in this respect, and lean your head against my shoulder, as you did when you were a little boy and gladly listened to what mamma said."

"Now as then, dear mother, your voice will not fail to calm all the rebellious feelings in my breast." Arvid put his arm around his mother's waist.

"Good! I count upon this power of mine. Do you know what is the matter with you, Arvid?"

"I expect that you will tell me."

"You have, like youth in general, allowed yourself to be carried away by your imagination and by the impressions which a more than ordinary beauty exerts upon the fancy. In a word, you have made yourself believe that you are dead in love with your cousin Albertine." The Majorskan smiled. "In order to bring yourself to the conviction that you cherish a great passion for your cousin, you lie here in all quiet on your sofa, and make of this unsubstantial dream a whole romance. I am sure that your brain has evolved many silly thoughts of revenge and hatred towards the daring individual who should ever venture to *lead Albertine to the altar.* You have already in your fancy seen yourself with weapon in hand fighting for your lady-love."

"Mother, you are making fun of me," exclaimed Arvid, hastily.

"No! I am only painting the picture from your own soul; but let us speak seriously. Have you ever analyzed your feelings?"

Arvid said nothing. His mother resumed:—

"Your silence tells me that you have not. Well then, I suppose I must help you to solve your heart's enigma. The first feeling you experienced for your cousin was admiration for her beauty and her elegant appearance, but this admiration was only for what charmed the eye; when the object was removed, the enchantment disappeared. To this was added a certain excusable satisfaction because she generally showed more friendliness to you than to your brother and sister, a circumstance which flattered your vanity. Then self-love whispered in your ear that she probably found you more agreeable than the others. Yes! it was all clear as the day; she talked very seldom to Jenny and Ernst, never to the Doctor, but constantly to you. You were allowed to offer her your arm, to carry her shawl,—all proofs of favor, which she gave you in preference to both the Baron and the Count. This gave you occasion to believe in your own power of attraction, in your advantage over everybody else. Ah! at seventeen we often think ourselves something very uncommon, and self-love is always ready to whisper various encouraging judgments about ourselves. I am very certain that during this period of enchantment you have often amused yourself with the innocent pleasure of admiring your own image in the glass. In short, your flattered self-love caused you to believe in your success with your cousin, and occupied you so often and so zealously that you ended

in considering yourself enamored with her in full earnest."

The Majorskan again paused, but Arvid remained silent. She resumed: —

"I will pass by your anger at the discovery that Albertine loved the Doctor. I thought that you would, through this occurrence, be cured of your childish fancy, but I now find that you considered the end of your little romance too trivial unless you could add the tragic effect of a grand jealousy. You have now for a long time racked your brains for an opportunity to occasion a right effective scene. You see, my boy, I have resolved that you shall not make yourself ridiculous either before Albertine or any one else. Therefore I will inform you of certain things which you in your blindness have overlooked. In the first place, what do you think is the reason of the preference Albertine has continually shown you in so obvious a manner?"

"Coquetry, the desire to increase the number of her adorers."

"Child! Do you not see that your vanity deludes you when you believe yourself to be the object of so beautiful a girl's coquetry, when you imagine that she would take so much pains only to gain a boy of seventeen as her admirer?"

"Indeed, mother, I cannot give any other interpretation to her behavior," rejoined Arvid hastily, with crimson cheeks.

"But I can, my son! She regarded you as a child to whom she could, without danger of being misunderstood, show kindness, and give all the preference which one so likes to give to a young boy; a preference, however, which she could not manifest to any of the other gentlemen without seeming coquettish. Never did it enter Albertine's mind that *you*, a youth who had scarcely left childhood, could be conceited enough to take her friendliness for an encouragement, for a proof that she had taken a fancy to you. I assure you that if you had begun to speak to Albertine about your inclination for her, she could not possibly have kept from laughing. See to it, my own Arvid, that you do not expose yourself to ridicule, but think calmly upon what belongs to your peace. Take good care, during your journey to Stockholm, and also on your visit to aunt's, not to play any part but your own, which is that of a modest but light-hearted youth. Life is no romance, but plain prose, and we become ridiculous when we try to make of it anything but what it really is."

The Majorskan kissed her son's brow, which was burning hot. She talked with him awhile longer in such mild and loving language that he finally declared, with a smile, that she was a very wise and skilful physician.

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At the dinner-table the Doctor was missing. He had gone to make a farewell visit, as he intended to leave that very afternoon. A physician in the city had promised to attend to his patients until the new substitute arrived.

But instead of the Doctor, quite another person was in the saloon when the Professorskan entered, and one who occasioned as much indignation as ever the Doctor had. It was — Minna.

The Major took the young girl by the hand, led her to the Professorskan, and said, —

"Here is your aunt, child! Thank her for what she has done for you in the past, for henceforth it will be I, your uncle, who will take care of you."

Minna stood before the Professorskan trembling and with downcast eyes, without daring to take her hand or even approach her.

"I have never acknowledged Herr Ekeberg as my brother-in-law; neither shall I acknowledge his child as my niece. Besides, ma'mselle owes me no thanks,

and she may leave my service whenever she likes."

"Oho, Sophie, so you sing in that tone! Very well; then I will tell you that neither I nor my children shall ever count relationship with you. It is not enough that you have already deeply humiliated this poor child when you gave her a servant's place in your house, you still wish to lower and wound her, but you see this must not occur in my house, under my roof."

"Papa, for God's sake say no more!" exclaimed Jenny, half weeping.

"Gustaf, remember that as a host and brother you owe your sister respect."

"Please let him continue, my sister-in-law; I need no mediator between my brother and me," said the Professorskan, haughtily.

"You are right, as your brother is man enough to be able to tell a heartless woman like you openly that he considers his house entirely too good for her!"

"Come, Albertine! I have had enough of rudeness, and my foot shall nevermore cross this threshold."

The very next day the Professorskan made her farewell calls, and then departed, so enraged at her brother that she did not even wish to see her sister-in-law, or take leave of any of the family. In a note full of bitterness she apprised the Majorskan of her desire to avoid meeting any one who belonged to her brother's family.

# PART II.

One Thursday afternoon near the end of November we find a few young men collected in Doctor Bergström's elegant bachelor abode in Queen Street. The rain poured from the heavens, and the blast howled around the corners.

The Doctor's suite consisted of four rooms, — first, a saloon; to the right of that a cabinet, whose walls from floor to ceiling were padded and covered with green damask. To the left of the saloon was a large library, filled with mahogany book-cases. The rest of the furniture in this room comprised a sofa and a dozen easy-chairs placed around a large table, and a writing-desk at one of the windows.

Here we find the Doctor and eight young men who were his guests.

"How deucedly strange things are in this world!" exclaimed Chamberlain Liljekrok, stretching himself comfortably in an easy-chair, while with evident pleasure he took a few slow puffs of a *cigar which* he had just lighted. "One person's death is another's bread. Thus for example, it was Bergström's good fortune that his Excellence Count H—— broke his leg on the way between his estate and W——. Had the misfortune occurred in any other place, Richard would not have been on hand, as was now the case; but, *apropos*, where were you coming from?"

"Dear Liljekrok," said Judge T——, "continue your logical reflections with regard to the broken limb, and do as you did when you were at Upsala."

"What did I do then?"

"You never came to any conclusion."

"T—— is right," joined in Lieutenant P—hjelm, a witty and lively young man, who could get no further on the road of knowledge than to become a student. At the time when we who are now assembled here were gay and merry students, it was always Liljekrok who began to bring up problems, and I who solved them."

"Here goes for the old habits, and a

health to the gay old times!" exclaimed a young man, engaged in the Royal Cabinet. All filled their glasses from the foaming bowl which stood on the table, and emptied them at a draught.

The Doctor himself was the only one who did not seem alive to the memories of the former happy days. He sat silent, with a brow as clouded as the November sky, and a look so serious that it seemed foreign to everything that could be called joy. After they had drunk, Lieutenant P—hjelm resumed, —

"If Bergström had not found himself on the road to W—— simultaneously with his Excellence, his Excellence would not have had him to thank for the setting of his limb; and if his Excellence had not broken his leg, our Doctor would not have been pushed ahead on the path of fortune with such incredible rapidity. Ergo, the broken limb brought with it his Excellence's gratitude, and gratitude recommended our friend in all circles where his Excellence is an oracle. Thus the point at issue, the broken limb, has made our friend's fortune, so that he is now overrun with people who wish him to cut off their arms, legs, fingers, and toes. That is the way it goes in this world; one always needs some notable to take him under his protection. Merit makes no one's fortune."

"Yes, if it goes on at this rate, Bergström is likely to be our most fashionable physician before long," said Judge T——.

"One makes his fortune with the knife, the other believes that he finds it at — the altar. The latter is the case with Stormhjelm. On Sunday the banns are to be read for him and Fröken von Krug."

"Who says so?" asked the Doctor.

"He himself; but what an absurd betrothal it has been!" replied the Lieutenant. "I visit at the Von Krugs, and have been with the betrothed pair, but I cannot remember that I have ever seen a girl treat a man with more marked coldness than Fröken von Krug has shown Stormhjelm. What is still more singular is that she has never worn a betrothal ring."

"That sounds quite romantic; but, on the whole, it does not astonish me," said the Royal Secretary Mandelstjerna. "I know a little of Stormhjelm's character. It is composed of an indomitable desire of contradiction. During his Upsala days he was an inveterate aristocrat, not from conviction, but merely because the repute of the nobility is irretrievably lost. All those ideas about inborn worth and purer blood which one laughs at, he paid tribute to, because they were in direct opposition to the opinions entertained by the students. They say that his mother once said to him, 'My son, never become a slave to your prejudices of birth, but remember that they are of no value unless accompanied by virtues and noble deeds.'

"Straightway he became the most zealous defender of these prejudices and would probably have made them his hobby if love had not forced him to turn away from them. It would have surprised me that he now marries a girl belonging to the petty aristocracy if you had not mentioned that she treats him with repellent coldness. He used to say, 'If I ever fall in love, it will certainly be with a woman who detests me. There is something exciting in conquering one who does not wish to yield.' These are his words. Resistance is the power which drives this character on."

During this speech the Doctor had leaned back in his easy-chair and remained silent.

"He has in any event gone victorious from the strife, as the banns are to be read on Sunday," observed the Chamberlain. "One can draw the conclusion from it that — "

"He is going to marry," completed the Lieutenant, laughing. They filled their glasses and drank Liljekrok's health.

Just then the Doctor's servant entered with the words, —

"A lady desires to see the Doctor."

Richard rose, and his guests cried to each other, —

"The happy Richard! He can receive ladies without any censure."

"What does she want?" asked another.

"Is she young?" exclaimed a third.

"Is it a patient or a flame?" inquired a fourth.

"Hush, gentlemen!" replied the Doctor; "remember that every one who visits a physician is absolved from all remarks." With this he left the room, while the others laughingly asserted that the hour was ill chosen for a sick-call.

The Doctor had in the mean time gone into the saloon, and when he found it empty, he turned with an inquiring gesture to the servant.

"I asked the lady to step into the cabinet," answered Johan to the expressive motion.

The Doctor laid his hand on the door of the cabinet, saying, —

"Is there a light in here?"

"I have placed a lamp on the table."

Richard now turned the knob and entered the cabinet. The door closed behind him.

The lamp threw a dim light over all objects. The reflection was not sufficient to illumine the room with its dark hangings. In consequence of this half-light the Doctor did not directly discover the person who was there. Half recumbent on the sofa sat a woman who had taken off her hat, but her head was so bent down that the Doctor could not distinguish whether she was young or old. She remained motionless, although she must have heard the Doctor's entrance.

Richard went nearer to her, as he thought, "She is either very sick or very unhappy."

He said aloud, —

"You have desired to see me?"

The lady rose slowly, and lifted her bowed head, so that she now stood upright before the Doctor. Scarcely had Richard's eyes fallen on this marble pale face, petrified with grief, than he threw himself on his knees before her, seized her icy-cold hands, and exclaimed in a voice full of anguish, —

"*Albertine!* O my God, what has happened!"

A sigh, which contained all that she had suffered since they parted, escaped from her agonized breast. She leaned towards him, whispering, —

"All have abandoned me, even my strength of soul; now I am here to seek your protection."

The Doctor was so agitated that he was unable to answer; he only raised her hand to his lips.

"I have made resistance, but in vain. I have entreated, begged at her feet, with a like result. To-morrow they will get the license."

"No, Albertine, no! it shall not go so far!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Therefore I am here, and I do not intend to return home. You are my protector, — the one who will shelter me from the violence they think of committing. Richard, will you also cast me off?" Albertine reached him her hands. The Doctor seized them again, and pressed them to his lips with all the warmth of love; then he said with his deep, earnest voice, —

"Never, my beloved, will I abandon you; but in order that I may serve you, you must immediately return home."

"Ask me to die, Richard, but do not ask me to return!" exclaimed Albertine, taking a step towards the door. "I shall make it impossible for you to send me back to this heartless mother. I shall show myself before your guests, and give my name and honor into their hands. All can I sacrifice, but not you."

"Not *your* name, not *your* honor, would you expose by this course, but *mine*. Hear me, therefore, poor, un-

happy child, who through me have suffered so much. The sacrifice you offer I cannot receive, because I should then commit a dishonorable, a contemptible act. You have come here, driven by your despair, to seek a protection which I cannot give you without staining your honor; but I shall, on the contrary, give you one which is valid before God and the law. Even before you came, I heard that the banns were to be read on Sunday, and my resolution was then taken. I made a solemn vow that it should not occur. Come with me, therefore, and return to your home."

These words were said in that tone which only love is able to give.

"To my mother!" exclaimed Albertine.

"No! to your father."

"Ah, Richard, you do not know him, — how weak he is before my mother, how forgetful of his duty to his children!"

"Albertine! have confidence in me, and believe it when I say I shall in him find you a true protector."

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We will now give a short account of what transpired after the journey from Rönby.

On her arrival in the city the Professorskan, in spite of her daughter's positive refusal, had proclaimed her betrothal to Count Stormhjelm; still the mother's authority had not been able to make Albertine wear the betrothal ring, or to change anything in her manner towards the Count. She was icy-cold, and never addressed him by any other appellation than Count.

The Professorskan was exasperated, and anticipated her son's return with inward despair, as she well knew that he would make common cause with his sister. It seemed, however, as if the Professorskan was to have luck with her. When the Professor came home in the beginning of October, Albert did not accompany him, but had remained in Germany, and would not return before the end of November. They now expected him daily, and therefore the Professorskan resolved that the banns should be read beforehand, so that the step would be irrevocably taken.

The Professorskan had had a hot strife with Albertine on the above-named Thursday, — a strife which the cold, unfeeling woman could not sustain with calmness; for Albertine had thrown herself at her feet, and implored her not to sacrifice her; but the Professorskan, who for an instant felt something like compassion stir her heart, had, thanks to her firmness, put an end to the scene by commanding her daughter to go up to her room and remain there until she was sent for.

After Albertine had left her, the Professorskan praised her own strength of mind, in consequence of which she had not allowed herself to be overcome by her weakness, but with unshaken firmness had advanced to the aim she had marked out for herself, — an aim which had only her daughter's happiness in view. As Albertine, like a head-strong child, did not know what was best for her, it was the duty of her mother not to be persuaded by unreasonable entreaties to forget what her daughter's welfare required.

After having argued the matter in this way, and succeeded in completely tranquillizing her somewhat perturbed feelings, the Professorskan was perfectly contented with herself and thought, not without satisfaction, of how she had now annihilated the Doctor's hopes, and at the same time shown that she was the prevailing one, notwithstanding he had been bold enough to assert that Albertine would not obey her.

Thursday was the Professorskan's reception-day, and although her Grace by no means wished any one to see Albert-

tine's tear-stained face, she had no objection if her friends wished to visit her in spite of the bad weather. Her desire was fulfilled, for Kammarrådinnan * Solkran's and Öfverstinnan † Strålstjerna came, although it rained, and blew a gale.

"How is the little *fiancée?*" asked the Kammarrådinnan.

"Albertine is a little indisposed, and is obliged to keep her room," answered the Professorskan.

Just as the worthy dame uttered these words, her daughter stole down stairs and left the house. Alone, without any attendant, Albertine hurried on through storm and blast until she stood before Richard's door.

Her Grace was in complete ignorance of all this, as she sat there chatting with the Öfverstinnan, the Kammarrådinnan, and two older ladies who had come a little later.

"Well, my dear Öfverstinnan, you made an agreeable journey to Switzerland last summer?" asked one of the ladies.

"Yes, a very pleasant tour. I was in company with your son, dear Sophie. Do you expect him back soon?"

"The last of next week."

"But, my dear Sophie, what do you say of his attachment to that girl? Is it not a strange fancy in so young and sensible a man!"

"Of what attachment do you speak?" inquired the Professorskan, who saw by her friend's exultant face that she had something disagreeable to say.

"You cannot possibly be in ignorance of it, my dear Sophie; but perhaps it is a secret. Your son has faithfully followed them from the time they started from Sweden. The reason why he prolonged his stay abroad was solely for the sake of accompanying them here."

"Of whom do you speak?" The Professorskan contracted her brow slightly.

"Good Heavens! could you, his mother, be the only one who did not know of his connection with the young Jewess, Nelle Israelli?"

"It is the first time I have heard the lady's name," replied the Professorskan, proudly, "and probably the connection between my son and her is one of those which young men in our corrupted time form from frivolity, but which cannot very well be mentioned to their parents."

"I thought the same, but was soon obliged to change my opinion, however, when at our meeting in Berlin I saw the young girl in company with your husband. He seemed to be very much interested in her."

"My husband!" exclaimed the Professorskan, and looked at the Öfverstinnan as if she believed that the latter spoke in her sleep.

"Yes, Herr Professor himself, who is rarely seen in your social circle, and never speaks with any ladies, — *he* was quite interested in Mademoiselle Israelli. We met several times, but he did not recognize me."

The Professorskan became crimson, and her lips were so thin that they were scarcely seen.

"But all that proves nothing, except that my husband and son found the Jewess's society agreeable during the journey. I, at least, cannot infer from it that Albert stands in any sort of connection with such a person."

"Ah, my friend, your reasoning is now, as always, correct, and I should have reasoned in the same way, had not —"

The Öfverstinnan made an effective pause.

"Had not —" The Professorskan fixed her sharp eyes on her friend with an expression which was not at all amiable.

"Had not chance brought us together in Switzerland. We were at the same

* Wife of a colonel.

† Wife of a chamberlain.

hotel. My room joined Mademoiselle Israelli's, and was only separated from it by a thin door. The result was that one evening I became an involuntary listener to a conversation between your son and the Jewess.

"And this conversation, of what did it treat?"

"Of nothing more nor less than a high degree of respect and affection, nay, admiration on his part, and much friendliness on hers."

The Professorskan had just opened her mouth to give a sharp answer, when Count Stormhjelm entered with Baroness G——. By this addition the conversation was interrupted, and the Professorskan took good care not to renew it.

The Count remained until all the others had left the Professorskan, prompted by a sign which she had given him.

"My dear Erik, I hope you will not fail to be here to-morrow forenoon, as my husband and you ought to go together to Count D——, and then, in his company, to the minister who can be seen at eleven o'clock."

"With your permission, I have thought of inviting myself here to breakfast."

"You are more than welcome. So we will meet at ten o'clock to-morrow?" She offered him her hand.

"Why have I not been allowed to see Albertine this evening?"

"Because she desired to be undisturbed until to-morrow afternoon. It is best to let her have her way. When the banns are read, her behavior will be quite different; this I predict."

"I count upon your foresight in everything."

"And therein you do right."

The Count kissed her hand, and bade her adieu; but just as he was going, the Professorskan said, —

"*Apropos*, I heard them speak of a Jewess this afternoon, a Mademoiselle Israelli. Do you know of her? What sort of a creature is she?"

"She is a kind of artist, that is to say, she engraves on stone, and besides she takes daguerreotypes."

"Ah! indeed, — and a Jewess?"

"Yes, an out-and-out Jewess."

"You know her?"

"Somewhat." The Count could not keep from slightly changing color; but this her Grace did not perceive. "I have had my picture taken by her."

"And her parents, what kind of people are they?"

"They are dead. It seems that her father came strolling here from Poland with his pack. She has told me so herself."

"And now she lives alone?"

"Yes, almost. She has, to be sure, an old aunt with her; but she is never to be seen."

"Is she wealthy?"

"I should think not. She earns a good deal, it is true, but then she takes a journey every year."

"Is she good-looking?"

"A question hard to answer; she is at once homely and beautiful."

"Ah! good-night."

"Permit me to ask a question." The Count fixed his clear eyes searchingly on the Professorskan. "Can any report have reached your ears which has occasioned these inquiries?"

"What report do you mean?"

"If you have heard nothing, I will keep silent." The Count bowed, and her Grace let him go. Her pride did not admit of her asking him what he knew about Albert and the Jewess.

That night her Grace did not sleep much. Thoughts of a highly unpleasant nature kept her awake. She looked back upon the singularly unhappy fate which seemed to pursue her. Her brother had married a woman from the people, her daughter had fallen in love with a man of the same class, and now, to cap the climax, she was threatened with having the child of an itinerant Jew for her

daughter-in-law. Ah, it was really too hard that she, who had laid herself out to instil contempt for these plebeians in the minds of her children, — she, who had given them such sound views of life, — should meet with the disgrace which such connections, according to her ideas, drew upon her; — she, who had counted upon it that her children would render her a respectful obedience, that they would regard her word as an oracle, and that she herself should stand so high in their thoughts that they would with blind confidence make her will their law, — she had seen her expectations cheated in a bitter manner. How different had not the results of her education been from what she had calculated! But the reason why they were so, the Professorskan could not find. Instead of seeking it in herself, she looked for it in her children, and came to the conclusion that their contumacy proceeded from their father.

It is really surprising how hard it is for people in general to find the true cause of the unpleasant things which befall them. This comes from the fact that they never wish to acknowledge their own faults. Had the Professorskan in the first place examined herself, she would in her children's persistence and immovable firmness have recognized the main traits in her own character. After this had become clear to her, she might have asked the question whether she considered her mode of bringing them up adapted to such a character as her own, and the answer would have been in the negative. She complained in her heart that they did not rely implicitly upon her judgment; but she forgot that confidence and true respect are never inspired by fear, but by love. Fear drives away confidence and puts dread in place of respect. Dread, — what does that engender? A constant effort to escape everything unpleasant. From it are nourished deception, hypocrisy, and secrecy; while love, on the contrary, is the mother of truth, confidence, and respect.

Ah! you parents who love your children and wish to bring them up in the right, remember that with a true and genuine affection you produce far more good than with severity. Rather sacrifice a little of the respect upon which one usually lays so much stress, in order to cultivate by your love and kindness the nobler instincts, and to these fear in no wise belongs. Fear is a slavish feeling, incompatible with an independent mind, and easily changes in full-grown persons to the desire to oppress in their turn.

The Professorskan saw with trepidation that she should not be able to force her son to a match after her taste, as she had done with her daughter, and that he would never give up an alliance which he had resolved to form. These thoughts drove the slumber from her eyes, and when she finally fell asleep, she dreamed that her son married a beggar covered with rags, and that Count Stormhjelm, just at the moment when the minister joined him and Albertine, changed to Doctor Bergström.

At this fearful dream the Professorskan awoke.

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As the clock struck ten on Friday morning, the Count entered the Professorskan's saloon.

"Have you informed my intended father-in-law that we are to go together to-day?" asked the Count while he and the Professorskan breakfasted.

"I did so yesterday," answered the Professorskan. "And now it only remains to tell him when the carriage is ready."

They finished breakfast; the Count and her Grace went into the cabinet, and she said with her cold smile, as she looked at her watch, —

"I shall order them to harness."

"It is not necessary; my carriage stands waiting."

"Then I shall let Hans inform Von Krug." She stretched out her hand after the bell-cord, but dropped it and stared with surprise at the person who at that instant entered.

It was the Professor himself. Had he, without being forced to it, showed himself in the lower room? This was something which had not occurred since he moved up on the second floor, twenty-seven years ago.

"Could he be sensible enough to interest himself in Albertine's union with Count Stormhjelm, so that he has waked up from his crazy abstractions?" thought her Grace.

The Professor — a tall thin man, with a stooping form — went towards the Count. He stopped before him, adjusted his spectacles, and regarded the young man with a peculiarly strange expression, saying, —

"Whom have I the honor of speaking with? I cannot remember that I have seen you before, sir."

"Dear Von Krug," interrupted the Professorskan in her sharp and commanding voice, "you are really very absent-minded. It is our intended son-in-law, Count Stormhjelm, whom you are to conduct to the minister, in order to get the license for him and our daughter Albertine."

The Professor put his glasses still closer to his eyes, straightened himself up a little, and coughed.

"Ah! yes, just so, my dear, very possible; but I cannot remember that the Count has asked my daughter's hand of *me*, or that I have given my consent, — cannot at all remember that I have done it."

"The Count has *my* consent, and is on this ground betrothed to my daughter."

"Perfectly correct, I will not dispute it, — h'm, h'm, — yes, so it is; mine ought to have been necessary however; I cannot think otherwise." The Professor had raised himself to his full height, and now stood erect before the Count. He passed his right hand over his brow, as if to recall some idea; and a dark flush flamed up on the parchment-colored cheeks when the Professorskan with her reproving voice answered, —

"I cannot see why the Count should need to turn to you, when he has obtained from *me* the promise of my daughter's hand."

These words seemed to restore the Professor's memory completely; for his glance, as if by magic, lost its absent expression, and now rested on the Count with calm earnestness, while, without answering his wife, he said to him, —

"I should like to know, Count, how it comes that you have not turned to me?"

"Because her Grace told me, Herr Professor, that you did not meddle in family affairs."

"Just so, that is perhaps true enough; but, Count, you ought not to allow yourself to be influenced by — by — by my wife, because you could not know what I thought about the matter. One ought never to overlook the main idea in any question. So you wish to marry my daughter?"

"Yes, Herr Professor, if you will give your consent to my union with the Frö-ken."

"What does this mean, Von Krug? Why do you meddle in things which do not concern you?" exclaimed her Grace, red with anger, and entirely unable to restrain her indignation any longer.

"Ah! my dear, is it you? — should think that you might be said to occupy a subordinate position in this matter, and therefore, my dear, remain silent, while the Count and I analyze the main idea."

"Have you become perfectly demented?" exclaimed her Grace

"H'm, h'm, would like you to maintain

silence, my dear." Then he again turned his glance to the Count.

"You desire my consent to your union with my daughter then? I think this was it?"

"Yes, Herr Professor. This consent would increase my satisfaction and confirm my happiness."

"Ah, indeed, — very possible, — should think that it is now as it ought to be, placed in the right order. Herr Count, this consent I cannot give you." These words were uttered, not with the Professor's usual meekness, but in a clear and decided tone.

The Professorskan took a step back, as if struck by lightning, and the Count turned pale, but asked with a smothered voice, —

"And the reason of this refusal? You ought to inform me of it."

"Perfectly correct. Well, I have two reasons, — *pro primo*, my daughter does not wish to marry you, and *pro secundo*, I am not willing that she should marry you. I have promised her hand to another." The Professor bowed to the Count, and was going to leave the room. This was more than her Grace could stand; she started forward, seized her husband by the arm, and exclaimed, trembling with anger, —

"Have you then not heard that *I* — I have given my consent to this union, — given *my* promise that the Count should have my daughter, and that I desire this marriage to take place?"

"Just so, my dear, — it is possible, I believe it; but as it is *your daughter* who is to marry and not *you*, it cannot be done. Herr Count," added the Professor with a mild earnestness, "make it clear to my wife that you cannot wed my daughter directly against my will and her own, and that you as an honorable man do not wish to do it."

"But I have also a voice in this matter, as it concerns *my child*."

"Very true, very true, my dear; but before the law it signifies nothing. Now, Herr Count, adieu. On no conditions will I give my consent to this union, — listen, my dear, — on no conditions." With this the Professor left the room, and the Professorskan remained standing motionless. The Count's voice roused her.

"Madam, you ought to have informed me of the Professor's way of thinking, and not lulled me with hopes which could never be realized. You would then have spared me this affront, and yourself the humiliation of being forced to say that Count Stormhjelm has broken the engagement with your daughter." He hastened from the room, and the next moment his carriage rolled away.

If the wheels of the Count's carriage had gone over the Professorskan's heart, they could not have occasioned her greater pain than was now the case. In a single moment her beautiful hopes had been riven asunder, annihilated, and she herself insulted. In the midst of all this humiliation she was haunted by the thought of her son and the Jewess. She could have crushed these ungrateful children, who cheated all the hopes of a brilliant social position that she had entertained; who made her a subject of conversation, perhaps a laughing-stock. She felt that she should never be able to forgive Albertine the disappointment she had caused her. She experienced an extreme resentment towards her daughter. Her first motion was to approach the door in order to go up to her, but she checked herself and muttered, —

"No! I will first try to calm my excited feelings before I say anything to her. I wish to talk to the presumptuous girl with crushing coldness, not under the influence of my just anger. I shall let her feel the whole weight of my displeasure, and that she has offended her mother in a way which cannot be forgiven."

She rang the bell. Martha appeared at the door.

"See here, Martha. Do you know whether any one visited the Professor yesterday?" inquired her Grace, who could not conceive that Albertine had turned to her father of herself, as he had never spoken two words at a time to his daughter. The Professorskan began to dread that her son had a share in what had happened.

"Yes; yesterday afternoon, while your Grace had company, I saw a gentleman and a lady go up to the Professor."

"Did you know them?"

"Not him exactly, but I knew her by the dress."

"Well, who was it?"

"Fröken Albertine; and he looked like —"

"The Justice?" said the Professorskan, with trembling lips.

"No; Doctor Bergström."

"Ah! exclaimed the Professorskan, and made a sign to Martha to leave the room.

As soon as she was alone she began to pace the floor excitedly, while the following words forced their way over her lips, —

"Ah! I ought to have suspected him, I ought to have been on my guard against this man with his polite manner and inflexible will, — this fortune-hunter, whom I might have known would try to cross my plans. I ought to have kept better watch over my recreant daughter. And Von Krug, who said that he had promised Albertine's hand? Wait, wait, Herr Doctor; it is not enough that you have obtained the father's consent; you shall not be able to marry my daughter with a shadow of honor when I at the same moment cast her off."

The Professorskan now went with hasty steps through the saloon, up the stairs, and directly to the Professor's room. She threw the door wide open, and approached the learned man with a bearing which indicated that she was fully prepared for the conflict.

She found him walking to and fro, apparently in a state of unusual emotion. From the whole appearance of the old man one would infer that through some violent pressure from without he had been snatched from the world in which his soul was accustomed to dwell, and thrown into one which was completely unknown to him. He resembled a blind man who had suddenly regained his sight, and looked around at the strange objects perfectly bewildered.

When the Professorskan entered with so much ado, he turned and looked at her. At the sight of his wife the dark flame again appeared on the sallow cheeks.

"You ought not to consider it strange if I demand an explanation of your behavior, — something to which I think myself fully entitled."

"Very correct, my dear, but I believe I also need an explanation. Yes, yes, that is a fact."

"See here, Von Krug, when was it customary for you to meddle in things which do not concern you, which only concern me, and in which I alone ought to have any say? I beg leave to know when that custom was introduced."

"Cannot remember that it is anywhere written that a father has nothing to do with his children. I know that I have never read anything of the kind. Since last evening I think I have clearly realized the injustice of so entirely forgetting that one is a father, because the child has the misfortune to belong to womankind. Besides, reason tells me that one never ought to give a woman unlimited power; for then the result is just as in this case, that she abuses it, and becomes a despot, cruel and tyrannical. Yes, yes, my dear, that is a fact."

"Can I be allowed to know who that pacific person is, who, by leading your thoughts to such things, tempts you to commit the silliest of all acts, namely, to break an engagement just as the banns

are to be read, after the whole world knows that the union was so near? Listen! I wish to know the name of the wretch who sets up a fool, like you, against his wife."

The Professor straightened himself up and looked at his tender half with a clear and steady gaze.

"Woman, I am tired of your dominion; therefore moderate your tone! You are a bad and hard mother; you wish to force your child to a marriage against her will, and this has excited my indignation, nay, my anger, because I detest all oppression. Human beings are born free, and no one has a right to oppress another. You have tried to do so, and therefore I now say to you, Woman, your reign over your child is ended, the girl stands under *my* protection, and I have given my consent to the choice of a mate which her heart has made.".

The Professorskan took a step nearer her husband, saying with an ill-boding expression, —

"And this choice has fallen on Doctor Bergström?"

"Yes! a young man who has my unqualified respect, who has shown me all the duty I have forgotten and all the power I have laid aside, without suspecting that it was so abused by you."

"And you, — a Von Krug, a nobleman, a man of good family, married to a woman belonging to an old and honored stock, — you wish to marry your daughter to your gardener's son?"

"Ah, just so, very correct! My grandfather's father was a gardener, and that did not hinder my grandfather from becoming Court-Assessor; consequently, my dear, the matter is settled."

The Professor's absent look seemed to give indication that it was hard for his thoughts to remain longer upon the subject of which they spoke.

"But I, Sophie Qvickfelt, say that this union shall never take place; that my daughter shall not dare — understand, dare — to marry without my consent. And I shall teach her to defy me!" The Professorskan was on the point of leaving the room, but her shrill voice and infuriated words recalled the Professor to the present and the protection he had promised his daughter. He therefore laid his thin hand on her arm and checked her. His deep-set eyes flashed with anger, and he said slowly, —

"Leave the girl alone! I will it!"

"You will it!" Her Grace laughed scornfully.

"Don't irritate me, woman, but listen! I have already wasted too much time on you. If you wish to continue to manage your house alone, to receive as much money as you need, it can only be done by your leaving the girl in peace. Should you let loose your violent temper against her, there will be an end to your power, and I will not give you two farthings. Now I desire to be alone." With this he pushed her out through the door and turned the key. When he found himself alone again, he drew a deep sigh, as if of relief, and murmured, —

"At last I can return to my dear books in peace. H'm, h'm, a terrible fuss with the women folks! H'm, h'm, perhaps I ought to see the girl, yet I should like to get rid of all difficulty. Just so, — h'm, h'm, — I suppose I must see to her, as I have so long forgotten that she was my daughter."

With these reflections, however, he went and seated himself at his writing-table, and there his eyes fell on an open book. It was a new philosophical work. At the sight of this the temptation became too strong; he glanced at the first page, and then there was an end to all other thoughts; the next moment he was absorbed in the perusal of the interesting work.

Her Grace thought for an instant that she should have a stroke of paralysis, when she found herself outside her husband's door and heard the key turned in

the lock. Weak nerves were not her fault, quite the contrary. Neither did she remain standing still, but went with rapid steps down the stairs. When she passed by her daughter's room, she checked herself and seemed to be disposed to go in, but conquered this feeling immediately, and continued her course to her own apartment.

Once there, she rang. Martha entered, and her Grace ordered that a servant should go to Doctor Bergström and ask him to call on her as soon as possible.

The messenger returned, and said that the Doctor had gone out, but that his servant would inform him of her Grace's desire.

The Professorskan was not one to wait when her feelings were excited. She was obliged to seek a vent for them in one way or another. Consequently the messenger had no sooner mentioned the Doctor's servant, than her Grace exclaimed, with a contemptuous motion of the head, —

"Has that fellow servants?"

"Yes, your Grace, and a carriage of his own besides."

"Very well! Tell the gardener that I wish to see him."

In a few moments a tall, majestic old man entered; he was about sixty years of age, broad-shouldered and strongly built, with long, snow-white, wavy hair which fell around a truly handsome face, all the features of which expressed integrity and great strength of character. He was clad in a simple blue coat, neat, but giving the appearance of a workman. The old man made a slight bow to her Grace, and without adding any question he remained standing, silent and erect, a little distance from the door.

"I have sent for you in order to resume a conversation which we had last fall, and in which we did not come to any result, — namely, about your removal. I desire you to leave my service."

"Your Grace has told me that once before, and what I then answered I answer now. When the contract between us is at an end I will leave; until then I shall remain in my place. Besides, the contract is signed by the Professor, and can only be annulled by him."

"But it is I who engaged you, and, when I am dissatisfied, I have the right to discharge you."

"Certainly; but to do this it is necessary, in the first place, that the dismissal shall occur at the time appointed in the contract, or when the contract has expired and is to be renewed; also that the Professor shall dismiss me."

"Your contract would thus bind me to keep you against my will?"

"Yes; unless your Grace can prove that I have neglected my duty. This you cannot do."

"But we might annul the contract by agreement, I should think."

"It is true, the Professor and I could do so, but I am not inclined to such a measure. I have fulfilled and shall fulfil all that the contract enjoins upon me, and shall consequently remain in my place until that has expired."

"But if I give you as large a sum as you can ask, to leave my service, will you not agree to it then?"

"No! I am not your Grace's gardener by necessity, consequently need not sell my rights, and do not mean to do so. This is my firm decision, and I will not deviate from it. Is there anything further that you wish?"

"You may go."

Her Grace was almost stifled with rage, and she burned with impatience to vent all her indignation upon the cause of it, — the hated Doctor.

But the hours passed, and no Doctor came. When the clock struck seven, her Grace thought with a secret triumph, —

"The cowardly wretch, who has dis-

turbed the peace of my family, and incited my husband and child against me, does not dare to come here. No! he blushes and fears to meet me, — me whom he has so terribly wronged."

Just then the servant announced, "Doctor Bergström."

"Ask him to come in; I am not at home to any one else," answered her Grace, still more enraged because the Doctor had come when she had the moment before exulted over his absence; for she could not despise him now as a coward.

The Doctor entered. His face was serious; his greeting polite, but cold. There was something in the man's whole demeanor which overawed her Grace, and just this increased her animosity. With his clear, deep-blue eyes, he so controlled her that in spite of her irritated state of mind, she was obliged to maintain the usual outward civility towards him, — something to which she did not consider him at all entitled. The Doctor's whole outward appearance evinced such unmistakable greatness of soul that all his motions bore the stamp of it. On the proud, high brow a noble dignity was enthroned. He had greeted her Grace silently, and thus forced her to address him.

"I probably do not need to tell you why I have requested an interview," began the Professorskan, and made a motion for him to seat himself.

"I have indeed expected this summons from your Grace," replied the Doctor coldly.

"Ah! you have expected it?"

Her Grace's eyes glittered.

The Doctor made a mute bow.

"So your conscience told you that you had insulted me, and that I should demand satisfaction from you?"

"No, madam, my conscience has told me nothing but that I have acted right. My reason, on the contrary, has let me *perceive that* you might perhaps wish to have an explanation, and that I am prepared to give."

"If this man were of my own blood, he could not be prouder than he is," thought her Grace. "This pride is impudence in him." She said aloud, —

"What name will you give to a man who knows that the mother of the girl he has succeeded in tempting to disobedience and forgetfulness of her duty will never give her sanction to his love, and who yet nourishes it in his heart, and from self-interest or passion allows himself to be led to the low act of inciting a husband against his wife, of sowing dissension between a married pair, and through his intrigues of giving occasion to a shocking scandal? Say, do you really think that he can claim to be regarded as an honorable man?"

"No! a man who would lend himself to so base an act is a mean, a contemptible fellow. But, madam, the man who is attached to a girl with a pure, deep, and earnest love, and finds the only obstacle to a union with her in a heap of prejudices, he has a right to be faithful to his love, if he keeps himself at a distance; but should the mother forget herself so far as to try to force her daughter's feelings, force her to marry one that she detests, and by this compel her to commit one of the most unnatural and immoral acts in life, then, madam, he fulfils his duty if he seeks to procure the poor child a protector in her father; and this, madam, is to act like a man of honor."

"Ah, sir! You seem to wish to give me a moral lecture, and with your fine words to gloss over your mean behavior. Do not think, however, that I allow myself to be deluded by it. You have, in spite of your proud words at Rönby, kept up a secret connection with my daughter, and worked her up to a resistance which she would never have dared to show but for you. You have then, with an adventurer's daring, ingratiated your-

self with my husband, and beguiled him into breaking an alliance which would have secured my daughter's future, while it may now, thanks to your care, become a source of obloquy. Ah! perhaps you think that you can in this way, and with my husband's assistance, manage so that my daughter, in order to save her honor, will have no other resource than to marry you."

"Your Grace is again mistaken. In the first place, I have not kept up my connection with Fröken. Since my departure from Rönby I have neither written nor maintained verbal communication with her. I have made a solemn promise not to expose her by any step, however innocent, and this promise I have kept. I am not one of those who break their word, and I have too much regard for the honor of the woman I some time hope to call my wife thoughtlessly to play with it."

"Do you know, sir, that your words are insolent to that degree that they can only be compared to the effrontery with which your father refused to leave my service. Perhaps you will deny that you have enticed my daughter to visit you, and that she and you have had secret meetings?"

A slight contraction of the Doctor's brow was the only effect these words produced, and he resumed, without paying any attention to them, —

"Your Grace says that I wish to gain through scandal, but you are wrong in this assertion. If that had been my intention, I should have acted very differently; and believe me, nine men out of ten would not have hesitated to avail themselves of their advantages, in order to vanquish and humiliate a proud and hard mother. If your daughter had been guilty of any transgression whatever, she would have been excusable; and one could have accused you rightfully, as the cause of it. Through your tyranny and hardness you have driven her to despair, and made her so miserable that she had no other resource than to fly to me for protection against the violence *her mother* wished to do to her feelings."

"So it was she who solicited your help?" exclaimed the Professorskan, with flaming cheeks.

"After she had begged in vain at her mother's feet she fled from her home to me."

The Professorskan started and became pale as death; the Doctor continued, —

"Your daughter has been under my roof. I have had her in my power; but I loved her too deeply not to revere and admire her for the confidence she showed me, and this made her sacred in my eyes. I commanded my selfish passions to silence, and restored her to the lawful protector of her rights by confiding her to her father's hands. He was the one to watch over her and give his daughter a refuge from all compulsion; the father was entitled to this by nature and law. Consequently you cannot assert that I have in any way infringed the strictest requirements of honor."

"And I suppose it was also strictly honorable for you to place me in a hostile attitude towards my husband? You think that you can marry my daughter because you have obtained his consent? You consider yourself able to dispense with mine?"

"No! I am both too conscientious and too proud for that." The doctor rose. "Before you give me your daughter's hand voluntarily, she will not become my wife. This is a vow I have made, because I will never allure the one I love from the holiest of all duties, a child's towards her mother. And now, as I have explained my behavior, I hope you will allow me to depart. My presence is necessary for a patient whom I have today operated upon."

"Certainly, sir; I only wish to say to you, never yet have I swerved from my

word, and do not expect that I shall do so now. I have once said, and I repeat, *My daughter shall never bear your name, never become your wife!*"

"Then she will remain unmarried; *for she will never bear another's name, never belong to any other as a mate.* I am just as sure of some time, with your consent, leading Albertine to the altar as that I now stand before your Grace."

"And I should thus become nearly related to my gardener? Ah, sir, you are insane! No! do not cherish so foolish a hope. You are the cause of my losing Count Stormhjelm as a son-in-law, and for this, sir, I will never forgive you, never cease to hate you."

"I shall one day induce you to forget your hatred, and render me your respect." The Doctor bowed and left the room.

Once away from the Professorskan, he stopped a moment in the hall, irresolute and hesitating. He cast a glance at the stairs which led up to the Professor's and Albertine's rooms, as if he intended to go up there, but this hesitation did not last long. He went quickly out into the court-yard, but instead of taking his way to the gate, he turned his steps to the garden.

To the right, just inside the garden gate, was a little red building occupied by the gardener. The Doctor went in, opened a door, and entered a large room. A cheerful fire was burning in the fireplace, and before it, in an old-fashioned easy-chair, sat Gardener Bergström. He was engaged in sorting a quantity of seeds on a table, which stood in front of him. The furniture of the room consisted of an old-fashioned bedstead with plaid curtains, an equally antiquated oak bureau, half a dozen chairs painted white, a sofa, and a large oak chest full of drawers, to which were fastened labels with the names of the seeds they contained. A cuckoo clock stood by the door. The windows were filled with flowers.

The gardener was without a coat, and had a clean blue apron on. When his son opened the door, Bergström raised his head to see who entered.

"Ah! is it you, Richard?" said he, with a friendly nod. "The weather is disagreeable this evening," added he, pointing to his son's wet overcoat, which the latter had taken off.

After Richard had shaken hands with his father, he drew a chair to the table and seated himself opposite the old man.

"Father, I come from the Professorskan," he began.

"Are you her physician? If that is so, then give the old witch something which will crush her pride. She is a perfect Satan, but she does not get very far with me. She has tried several times, but it is no use. Has she sent you here to tell me to go to the Devil?"

"No, not at all; such a commission I am not the man to execute."

"If you have my grit in you, you are not likely to be particularly easy to deal with. But what the deuce has got into the old woman to wish to turn me out of doors so suddenly?"

"You must attribute the cause to me. She is enraged at me."

The old man regarded his son through his glasses with a steady look.

"Well, what have you done to her?"

"I love her daughter."

"Boy, are you crazy?" exclaimed the father, and struck his clenched hand on the table, so that the seeds hopped about. "Have you also got the notion to waste your happiness and your life for such a proud set? It seems to me that we have lost enough by them; there must be an end to it now."

"Let us leave my love and its object, and believe me, father, I do not belong to those who allow the pride of others to occasion them misfortune; let us return to the Professorskan. Her pride is mor-

tally wounded by my audacity in regarding myself as her equal. All who stand in relationship to me are hateful to her, and therefore I ask you once more, why should you, who have a very snug property, continue to depend upon others, when you might live a calm and independent life in your old age. One who has toiled and striven all his life through has a genuine right to enjoy the fruits of it in his old age. I know no one who is more entitled to this than you. Why make yourself a slave to people's caprice and pride, when you can live comfortably, if not with me, as you have positively refused to do, then on your own property, which is more than sufficient?"

"Listen, Richard. I thought I had once told you that you need not trouble yourself about me, that the life I lead is according to my own desire, and that I do not care to change it; but this does not seem to be enough for you. You still come back to the same subject. Well then, I suppose you must know my reasons. You see, I was born and brought up among the working classes. I, like you, might have acquired knowledge, and in this way got out of the class in which I was born; but my father thought otherwise. 'A laborer's child ought to remain a laborer,' was his view, and I became a working man. The work of my hands is the same to me as that of thought is to you. My hands are my creative ability; I bring up from the earth beautiful growths, and rejoice at it. In my younger years, if at any time I stood leaning on my spade and thought with envy of those who had become workers in the domain of thought, I became reconciled directly with my fate, through industry and perseverance. I became skilful in my vocation, obtained good situations and spared no pains to make you what I myself would have liked to become. Work became my joy, my life; economy, my habit. I *had* two children; they constituted my future."

The old man ceased, and leaned his head in his hand. A long pause ensued, which the Doctor did not break. His gaze rested on his father lovingly and sadly. It was evident that the son divined what the old man was thinking of. Finally the latter resumed: —

"In short, you alone remain to me. It is you, my boy, who will one day enjoy the fruits of the old gardener's avarice, as people call my economy. It is for you that I have saved. Hush! do not interrupt me. If I now resigned my work and set myself to enjoy a comfortable life, I should die of weariness. With what would you have me wear away the interminable hours, when I am accustomed to read only my Bible and the newspapers? How would you have me drive away my bitter memories, when manual labor is my recreation and my pleasure? Should I seek forgetfulness by sitting in a tavern among my equals, from education rude as I, but from nature still ruder? No! so long as these arms are strong enough to lift a spade, so long will I work; for work is my consoler, my friend, and my confidant. It is a habit which has become my nature; deprive me of it, and I shall be consumed by *ennui* and regret."

"But why not buy a garden and cultivate it? Then you would be your own master, and yet faithful to your habits?"

"You are mistaken. I have worked for others all my life. To do my work better than ordinary servants, to fulfil my duty with greater scrupulousness, I regard as an honor. If I should now work for myself, this endeavor would disappear; if my garden were worse attended to than others, it would not affect me; consequently the conscientious efforts which I now make, and which are a life-giving spur in my soul, would be gone. I should find my work without aim because it is not accomplished for others. Therefore, my boy, let the old man keep his old habits; and leave him to himself.

The day that he was obliged to change them, he would no longer have the same strength and health. Believe, once for all, that I do not allow myself to be wounded by what a demented old woman in her pride is pleased to say. I have not your sensitive feelings, because I have not imbibed them with a refined education. When I know myself that I attend to my work better than others, that I punctually and carefully perform all my duties, and that no one can justly find any fault with me, it does not trouble me in the least if they choose to put on aristocratic airs and show their superiority. If they have no better sense than to behave so meanly towards a virtuous and trusty servant, then it is their fault and not mine. I have had the vanity," continued the old man, "to wish to make of the simple workman's son an able man, who might become his pride, and in this endeavor of mine, Richard, you have helped me to succeed. You are my pride and my joy; any other I do not need in this life."

"And no one on earth can have a greater right to derive joy from his son than you, my father, who from my tender childhood have in a simple but impressive way taught me what duty and honor demand. When I think of my boyhood, you stand before my soul as the personification of stern integrity and incorruptible honor. I feel proud of being your son, for if there are any virtues in me, you have developed them by words and example."

"Well then, my son," said the old man, as he rose and laid his hand on the Doctor's shoulder, "they may assert, if they dare, — these aristocrats who always wish to rob the working-man of his freedom, and still in our day degrade his daughters, — that the children of the people cannot become men far worthier a place in the community and more deserving of their country than they themselves, who try only to oppress."

The father and son talked awhile longer, and then the latter left, to visit a patient.

Life is a great theatre; one scene follows another, one actor succeeds another, and so it goes *ad infinitum*. Of the great solution we are all ignorant. As a narrator we must also conduct our reader from scene to scene, and when one of the actors in the story withdraws, we hasten to bring forward another, until we arrive at our *dénouement*.

We therefore change the scene, and transfer ourselves to Albertine's room. She had been sternly forbidden by her mother to leave it.

The same evening that the interview took place between the Professorskan and the Doctor, Albertine sat in her room, entirely ignorant of what had transpired. That something would occur, she realized more than well. Her isolated position became more and more painful, because of the uncertainty of the result of her father's interference in the wedding affair. Besides, a great degree of distrust in him made her fear that her mother would yet come off victorious. To be sure her mother had commanded her to remain in her room, — a plain sign that she was enraged; but still this did not prove that she had yielded. In vain Albertine hoped that her father would remember to inform her in a few words of the result of his action; but he did not appear, and she fancied that she saw in this a proof of his defeat. But, on the other hand, she knew how abstracted he was. In such anxiety the day came to an end without freeing the young girl from the agony of suspense which filled her soul.

Finally this condition became intolerable, and Albertine took the resolution to transgress her mother's command, and visit her father, in order to try, in spite of his timidity, to ascertain from him what the issue had been.

While her Grace was having the con-

versation with the Doctor, Albertine stole across the corridor with noiseless steps to her father's room. When she stood before his door, her heart beat violently, and she experienced almost as great a degree of fear for him as she had ever felt for her mother.

Her father was to the young girl a stranger, a mysterious person, a being whom she had seen only at meal-times, and then had simply greeted. She could not remember to have exchanged any words with him before, until the previous afternoon when the Doctor pleaded her cause before him. Now she was about to approach this mysterious father, of whose disposition she had no idea, save that he was a little peculiar, or rather not quite in his right mind.

From this indecision she was soon snatched, however, by the Professor's servant, old Hans, a taciturn hermit like his master, who came from the Professor with a tea-tray. He started when he opened the door and found himself face to face with the Fröken. Albertine, who at this sudden encounter recovered complete control over her vacillating feelings, inquired, —

"Is the Professor alone, Hans?"

"Entirely alone," was the answer, and Hans left the way free to her.

Albertine entered, and found the Professor walking the floor with the praiseworthy object of taking a little exercise after his meal. When he saw Albertine, he stopped abruptly and stared at her, evidently making an effort to recall to memory something which he had forgotten.

"Dear papa," began Albertine with a somewhat uncertain voice, "I hope I do not disturb you?"

"Ah! is it you, my child? was just going to see you when I was hindered by Schopenbauer, — a very interesting work; he is especially sharp-sighted in all that he says about woman. I have scarcely read anything more profound. But how is it? H'm, h'm, — you look quite pale, — h'm, h'm, — do not know just how I shall speak, — h'm, — have never had girls to deal with, — h'm, h'm. Can I help you in any way?"

The Professor offered her his hand, and in the abstracted look was an expression of mildness and goodness of soul which touched Albertine deeply.

"Ah, my dear papa," she whispered, seizing the outstretched hand and raising it, before he knew it, to her lips.

"There, there, my child," stammered the Professor, somewhat confused, "come and sit down. Now I remember plainly how it was. Yes, yes, your mother became very angry, your betrothed could do nothing in the matter, and I said that — that — you need not marry. I think that was the way it was. Yes, yes, precisely so; and then your mother was here and made a great fuss; but the banns will not be read. And this, I suppose, was the main matter, — is it not so?"

Albertine was deeply moved and unable to answer, but again kissed the wrinkled hand which held hers, while the tears ran down her cheeks. This expression of tender feeling was something so new to the poor recluse that it warmed his heart and gave him a strange sensation.

"Well, well, my dear girl, do not weep! If there is anything you want, anything you desire, only let me know."

"My dear, beloved father, how grateful I am for what you have already done! Ah! how happy it makes me to think that I am again free!"

"Ah! h'm, h'm, — glad that I have been able to do something for you; but — h'm, h'm — he was no bad-looking man, your betrothed, — h'm, h'm."

"I suppose mamma was very much provoked?"

"Should think so, — made a terrible fuss, — thought that I never should get rid of her, — h'm, h'm; — but would consider it right for you to try to become reconciled with her, — consider it wrong,

for children to oe ungrateful, therefore—try to make up again."

Albertinė, who saw so much kindness and sympathy in her father's glance, took courage to speak to him as to the one she had to thank for life. With the natural simplicity of her character, she told him about her youth, and how lonely she had felt during the period when the heart has such need of affection; and yet she had never dared to approach her mother, had never experienced any tender treatment.

The Professor listened to her in silence, and perhaps in the learned man's own breast there was an echo to the complaint which passed over his daughter's lips. Perhaps some memory from the beginning of his married life told him that he too had desired that the atmosphere around him might have been warmer and more full of love. In short he listened to Albertine's confession with an unusual glimmer in his deep eyes, and when she finished, he pressed his lips to her brow, and uttered a few words of love and consolation.

The Professorskan had long since retired when Albertine glided out of her father's room and returned to her own. As she stepped out into the corridor she met Hans, who held a letter in his hand.

"For the Fröken," said the close-mouthed servant.

On reaching her room Albertine read the following:—

"You are saved, beloved, and I with you; but this rescue has occasioned your mother a bitter grief, and this we must not forget. She has through you suffered the greatest sorrow her proud heart can feel, and it is therefore you, my noble girl, who must reconcile her with what your freedom has cost. Seek to approach her with love and true filial affection, and mitigate the bitter draught which she is obliged to swallow. It is you, my own Albertine, who must try to propitiate her, and beg her to forget the sting you have given. *Our happiness consists only and solely in never forgetting our duty, even if others forget theirs towards us.*"

"Keep good courage and rely upon Him who never abandons those who trust in him. Believe in my love.

"Thy RICHARD."

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The following morning her Grace sat stiff and straight, in full morning toilet, at the elegant breakfast-table. She was all alone, and, to keep to the truth, we must confess that she did not have a particularly good appetite. No! the defeat she had suffered so wrought upon her that she could not take food. In addition to this she now, after pouring out all the gall she could give vent to, began to calculate the consequences of the broken engagement. What could she say to all the acquaintances whom she had told in confidence that the banns were to be read on such a day, and who would present themselves to congratulate the intended Countess? Ah! one could really lose appetite for less than that; for how these friends would now scoff at her! What derogatory stories they would make up! The Professorskan rose hastily from the table at the thought of all these humiliations. Just as she made this motion, the door opened, and a young girl with deathly pale cheeks stepped in.

If the Professorskan had seen a Medusa's head she could not have shown a greater degree of surprise, but this emotion was momentary; the next instant her face was as cold as ever, and an expression of contempt and inexorable sternness rested upon it. She remained standing before the person who had entered with an upright bearing, her head thrown back and her eyes dilated. She met her with a crushing glance from head to foot, as if asking how

she dared to show herself. Albertine, on the other hand, had remained motionless by the door, and fastened a look full of mild earnestness upon her mother.

"How dare you appear before me? Is it to defy me still further? Is it to show that I have ceased to be the mother you ought to obey and respect?"

"O my mother!" exclaimed Albertine, taking a step towards her; but the Professorskan drew back. "I come to entreat your forgiveness for not having courage to obey you."

"Forgiveness! forgiveness for trampling respect for me and yourself underfoot, for drawing shame and disgrace upon me. Verily, you have calculated too much upon my indulgence. Did you then not know that I would never understand, never forgive you? You have fled to others to avoid obeying me. You have through this transferred my rights to others, and if I now in my turn reject you, I only continue the work which you have begun."

The door opened, and the Professor was seen behind his daughter.

"H'm, h'm, my dear, I believe you are — are engaged. Otherwise I would like to say a few words to you, — would like to tell you something."

Without answering, the Professorskan walked proudly across the floor to the cabinet. The Professor followed her. When he passed by his daughter, he whispered, —

"Stay here, my girl."

What transpired between the Professor and the Professorskan we will relate briefly. The former tried, at first, with his usual moderation, to persuade his wife to forgive her daughter and refrain from all reproaches. When this failed, he gave her to understand, very seriously, that if she did not comply with his desire he would fix the sum which she could draw in future. He even threatened to send his daughter away to board unless she was willing to forgive her. These threats had the desired effect, for the Professorskan instantly realized that if he carried them out, her friends and acquaintances would have still more occasion for disparaging allusions and dubious conjectures of all sorts, and this the Professorskan by no means wished. The result was that she promised to forgive Albertine, and the Professor left his wife, happy and proud as a general who had gained a battle. Her Grace said to Albertine, —

"Forgive you I cannot, neither can I forget, but I will say no more about it. You have my permission to resume the usual order. I beg to be excused, however, from all talk about what has occurred."

So forgave this mother, who had never understood her duty, and never wished to see her own faults.

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We turn the leaf and transport ourselves from city life, and the Professorskan's cold home, to the country and the pleasant Rönby with its genial, moral atmosphere. It is the week before Christmas. The Majorskan is expecting her two sons home for the holidays. The horses are to be sent to W—— for them, and the Majorskan is strongly inclined to go to town herself, to make some purchases.

In the light and comfortable saloon sat two young girls, working diligently on a piece of embroidery.

"You look so sad, Minna; what are you thinking of?" asked Jenny.

"I have only one and the same thought, dear Jenny, and that is about Albertine," answered Minna, sighing. "How lonely she must be without anyone who cares for her!"

"Her last letter indicated a calm state of mind, and ought to have satisfied you; because you need not now fear that she will be forced into a hateful marriage."

"That is true, but — "

Minna bent deeper over her work to conceal her tears.

"But what? Speak out, dear Minna; it will make you feel better. You must take fresh heart, for to-morrow we are to begin our great Christmas baking."

Jenny smiled so encouragingly at her cousin.

"No, Jenny, I do not have courage to say what torments my heart. You might consider me ungrateful, and that I am not."

"Nonsense, dear child! I could never consider you ungrateful. Ah no! Jenny has better judgment than that. Tell me your great distress. I suspect that I have pretty nearly guessed what troubles you."

Minna looked up at Jenny with an inquiring expression; the latter nodded encouragingly.

"Ah, Jenny," the young girl began, "you must promise me not to feel bad. I suffer from regret, from longing for Albertine. I may do what I will; it is no use. My thoughts fly to her, and my heart longs incessantly to see her, to hear the sound of her voice, and be soothed by her words. It is as if I missed a part of my soul. There is a void within me which cannot be filled, and I would be willing to give years of my life to see and talk with her one hour." Minna ceased, and two tears fell down on her work.

"You love Albertine very deeply," said Jenny in a mild voice.

"Yes, Jenny; she is the only one I have loved in the whole world, and never shall I be able to hold any one else so dear. My affection for Albertine is such that I have regarded every fault in her as a virtue, because I never could consider anything wrong which she did. Every act that she desired of me I performed without reflecting whether it was right or wrong. So long as it was her desire, I did not need to know more. I was oppressed, often harshly treated, but it did not affect me. I still continued cheerful and happy, for I had her and my youth. My jests called forth many a glad smile on her lips, and then I was wild with joy. Now, — now I am surrounded by love and kindness, in a social position which ought to make me happy, and yet I appear to myself like a being who has been deprived of her soul, and who can neither rejoice nor suffer more." Again Minna paused, and again the tears dropped down on her work.

"But, Minna, will you not be able to like mamma and me a little? Believe me, we feel a sincere affection for you, and you ought to find a recompense in this for the loss you have suffered. Ah! I would so like to see you happy. Try to become attached to us."

"Jenny, I love you all very dearly, and am deeply grateful for the kindness which uncle and aunt have shown me; but the heart has a world of its own; over that we have no control; there feeling governs with an absolute power, and all attempts to check its demands are futile. My heart, from the time I began to distinguish its pulsations, has beat warmly and exclusively for *one being*. All my ability to love, all the need of affection which my heart entertained, I have exhausted upon this one person. She constitutes the object of all my thoughts, and is my only joy. In vain, in vain, do I try to force this feeling back, and let others take its place. Years may perhaps elapse before we meet again; but even when I become old, my feelings will remain the same, they will survive me."

Jenny put her arm around Minna's neck, and whispered with her caressing voice, —

"My poor little Minna, who, like a dove that they have deprived of its mate, must sit here and long for the absent friend! We will often speak of her, and then, when you are allowed to

return to Albertine in thought, and paint her with words to me, your regret will become less bitter."

"Jenny, who has made you so good, so indulgent? Instead of being displeased with the ungrateful one, you caress and console her."

"That is natural, is it not? I live in the midst of all those I love, am happy, and feel no longing, no regret. Fate has deprived you of the only one you held dear. Well then, it is the duty of the happy to console the unhappy."

The work-bell rang, and Minna rose from her seat, but Jenny detained her.

"Perhaps these domestic cares are disagreeable to you? If so, 'Minchen,' you shall be relieved of your week. Mamma and I will then take turns as before."

"You dear, good Jenny!" exclaimed Minna. "How you try to spoil me! But," added she, smiling, "you are mistaken when you think that I do not like household cares; on the contrary, they seem to me something new, and I am consequently diverted by them." With this she nodded to Jenny and left the saloon.

"It is a strange world we live in," thought Jenny, but got no further; for a carriage stopped at the door, and Jenny could not refrain from going to the glass-door to see who it was.

"Baron Fritz," murmured she, and smiled; "but who has he with him? Good Heavens! I believe it is the ex-betrothed. Yes, it is Count Stormhjelm. How pale he looks! If it were not a sin to laugh at a person's defeat, I should certainly laugh at the Count's. We will now see if he continues to talk so grand about being master of his fate!"

While Jenny was holding this mental soliloquy, she had resumed her place, so that she sat at her embroidery when the gentlemen entered. At the same moment the Majorskan came in from the bedroom.

The Count greeted the ladies quite unconstrainedly, and seemed just as usual. The Baron immediately took a seat by Jenny, while the Count conversed with the Majorskan. Jenny raised her finger threateningly at the Baron, and said with her bright smile, —

"I am provoked at you, Baron; yes, really angry!"

"Ah no! you cannot be so; Fröken Jenny is too good for that."

The Baron had entirely laid aside his drawling accents.

"Fröken Jenny is not good, and besides she has every reason to be angry. Yes, it is no use for you to laugh. I am displeased in good earnest."

"But, good Heavens, at what?"

"Now he asks 'at what'!" exclaimed Jenny, with a comical air. "You are actually incorrigible. First, you made an agreement with me to establish a girls' school at Stjernebro on a large scale, like the one I have on a small one. You asked me to help you; you grew enthusiastic over my ideas; you made fine speeches about the feasibility, the judiciousness, the humanity of such a work, and it made me quite happy. I solicited mamma's aid and devised a plan, as well as made a list of the pupils I thought most entitled to be admitted in the beginning. Besides this, mamma and I had written down the names of the teachers we wished to engage. What happened? Thus equipped, we went over to Stjernebro; it is now five weeks since then. Very well, when we arrived, the intelligence met us that you had gone to Stockholm. Well and good; if you had only been so kind as to communicate your plans with regard to the school to Aunt Sigrid, you might have gone to Otaheite, if you had wished to; but she had not heard a word about the matter, and we returned with our lists. I was obliged to write a countermand to the ladies that we proposed as teachers, so that they should not be kept waiting

and thus lose more advantageous situations."

"That is a good load of accusations," said the Baron, smiling; "but do you really know whether I have made myself deserving of your anger, or whether my sudden departure was not a mission of mercy?"

"Ah! I do not believe it," rejoined Jenny. "No, indeed, it was one of your usual caprices."

The Baron leaned forward and whispered, —

"No, it was not a caprice. Believe and forgive me."

"Forgive you I certainly do, but allow me to doubt."

Jenny offered him her hand.

At the dinner-table the Major introduced Minna. The Count's eyes rested upon her with such an earnest and penetrating expression that the young girl saw very well that he recognized her.

Further on in the afternoon, after those older gentlemen had arrived who came to play whist with the Major, the Count approached Minna as she sat quite busy at her embroidery, and took a seat opposite her.

"I do not know whether I am mistaken," said he, "but it seems to me that I have had the honor of meeting Mademoiselle Ekeberg before, although I cannot remember where?"

"You saw me last summer, Herr Count," replied Minna, coldly.

"Here? it is not quite clear to my memory."

"I was then in Fröken von Krug's service."

"You! A niece of the Professorskan?"

"Yes, Herr Count."

"You were brought up with the Fröken then?"

"Yes."

Minna did not seem inclined to enter into any further explanation.

"And correspond with her?"

"Yes!"

The Count passed his hand over his brow, and when he again fastened his eyes on Minna, there was something dark in his look.

"You were her attendant to the forester's cottage if I recollect aright?" resumed the Count in a lower tone.

Minna kept silent.

"You probably know that I have been betrothed to the Fröken?" His voice sounded haughty.

"No! not that you have been betrothed to her, but that you have tried to gain her hand by force." Minna now looked up at the Count.

"Ah! you have taken impressions, I perceive. I would like you to remember what weapons I possess against the friend of your childhood in that love-affair, which, if it was ever mentioned, would scarcely redound to the honor of either of you."

"No disgrace can ever arise from it unless you, Herr Count, mean to spread some derogatory report, and this would not be very honorable in you towards a girl whom you have made so terribly unhappy."

"Verily, I cannot see what unhappiness there is in becoming Countess Stormhjelm." The Count rose, adding, "She shall not have rejected me unpunished; rest assured of that." He went off; Minna looked after him. Her sad expression had disappeared, and there was something energetic, almost defiant, in the look with which she followed the Count, just as when her Grace surprised her before the mirror with Albertine's hat on. Then she rose and hurried to her room. On reaching it, she placed herself before the glass and regarded her own image attentively.

Jenny, who had seen Minna rush from the room in that headlong style, believed that the Count had said something disagreeable, and hastened after her. When she entered, she stopped at the threshold

and burst into a ringing laugh when she found Minna engaged in coquetting with her own image. At Jenny's laugh Minna turned round and asked, —

"Tell me frankly, Jenny, how do I look?"

"Why, you look quite well."

"That is not enough. I wish to know whether any man can fall in love with me?"

"Most assuredly. You have beautiful, large, glowing brown eyes."

"Yes, but my nose is *retroussé*."

"You dear child, one never falls in love with a nose," answered Jenny, merrily. "You have fine teeth."

"True, but my mouth is too large."

"Who do you think would become enamored with a person's mouth? Besides, you have beautiful black hair."

"And a dark skin."

"That is no matter. It is with the soul's qualities that one becomes captivated more than with the body's. This is the way I console myself when the mirror tells me that I am ugly. You, Minna, are good-looking, so that soul and body both contribute in your case. But why have you begun to think of pleasing?"

"Because I would like — No, I cannot speak of it, you would laugh at me."

"If I cannot know this afternoon, I certainly shall some day. Be sure that I will have my eye upon you." Jenny tripped out of the room.

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A day or two afterwards, we find Jenny at home all alone. Minna had accompanied the Majorskan to town; the Major had gone to one of the neighbors, and Jenny, who had just finished baking some cake and pastry, sat down to rest on a sofa in the saloon. There had been a heavy fall of snow, and it was good sleighing. A fire was blazing on the hearth, and its reflection illumined the room, as Jenny had not allowed the candles to be lighted. The young girl now sat with her head leaning on her hand, and seemed to be in deep thought. Suddenly the sound of sleigh-bells was heard, which gave indication that some one was driving up into the court-yard at full speed.

"O dear!" sighed Jenny, "now there is company coming, and I am entirely alone! What a shame it is that people cannot stay at home so near Christmas!"

While Jenny was thus grumbling, she lighted a lamp and at the same instant heard a well-known voice say in the hall, —

"Good evening, Greta! Are the family at home?"

"No one but the Fröken."

"And where is the Fröken?"

"In the saloon."

Then followed a disrobing, and the next moment the door opened.

"There you are again!" exclaimed Jenny, laughing. "What has brought you here now?"

"The certainty of finding you alone, Fröken Jenny," answered the Baron, smiling.

"I must say that sounds well, when you have just been inquiring for the family."

"What else could I do? I must talk to you without seeming to desire it."

"Then I think the simplest way would have been to ask for me directly," replied Jenny, still playfully, and invited the Baron to take a seat. "Well, what do you wish? Shall we again begin to talk about our school?"

"Certainly; but before we come to that, I have much else to say. In the first place, do you remember that you once said, 'I would like to see the former Baron Fritz again'?"

"Yes, more than well. I desired that you might again become enthusiastic for the right, and take an interest in your fellow-beings."

"You said still more. You found me to be a person who neither benefited others nor himself; in a word, you considered me an idler."

"Ah! something even worse, namely, a being who cared for nothing but luxury and comfort."

"Well?"

"What do you mean, Baron?"

"Do you still find me the same?"

Jenny leaned her head on her hand, and reflected a moment; then she replied, —

"No; you have indeed changed, and that for the better. Let me think. You have begun to interest yourself in your dependents, in their welfare, and to superintend the cultivation of your lands. Ah, Baron Fritz, you have really become quite a different person!" Jenny gave him her hand with a captivating smile. "Something of your former self has returned, and it is only at times that you fall back into your indifference."

The Baron had taken the little hand, and retained it, while he said, with emotion, —

"If such is the case, Jenny, it is your work. You have now the same influence over me that you had when I left you six years ago. The sound of your voice and your friendly words have brought me back to a time when my heart had not yet experienced the power of passion; you said once, in your simple and striking way, 'There is one medicine for all disorders of the soul, and it is called *work*.' I have tried this medicine."

"And you found it to possess a great power to heal the wounds of the heart; is it not so?"

"Yes! and for this I have you alone to thank." The Baron raised Jenny's hand to his lips.

"I am glad to hear it; for it proves that the friendship between us has been of benefit, and is not merely an empty word."

"Ah! I hope you have never doubted that I was attached heart and soul to the inmates of Rönby; but I am one of those persons who, if left to themselves, sink into a melancholy dreaming over the sorrows which have befallen them. The lively enthusiasm of my youth is extinguished, and when I am not under the influence of your words I fall back into my indifference. This, Jenny, you alone can remedy."

"In what way?"

"By becoming my wife."

Jenny looked at him surprised, as if she had not understood him.

"Ah, Jenny, life at your side would again become beautiful! Could you not find your happiness at mine?"

He tried to take Jenny's hand, but she drew it back with a smile full of embarrassment.

"Baron Fritz, you have now propounded such a singular question that — that — I do not know whether I ought to remain."

"Jenny, answer me frankly: Will you become my wife? Do you not have sufficient affection to share with me life's bright and cloudy days? Answer me with your usual frankness without any constraint."

"So be it," said Jenny with a friendly smile. "You ask me if I have affection for you? Much; but it is a sister's; and to be able to give you my hand, and unite our fates, something more is demanded; love is required for that. This I do not entertain for you. Lay your hand on your heart and ask, 'Do I really love Jenny? What answer do you think it would give?"

"That Jenny is the only woman with whom Fritz Silfverkrona can become happy; the only one who can cause him once more to try to fill his place in life with interest."

"Thank you for not making any assurances of love. You like me, I am to you so dear a friend that you would will-

ingly spend your life with me; but *love*, this you feel as little as I."

"If you were right, Jenny, would not the deep respect and the great confidence I have in you be feelings of as enduring a nature as love's flame, which often burns out so soon? Should we not, on the basis of our affection, be able to raise as permanent a matrimonial structure as upon passion or love?"

"Perhaps, if we were not both so young; but as it is — I am only twenty. Have I the right to assert that my heart will never know love? Would it not be presumptuous of me, unacquainted as I am with the world and my own feelings, to bind my fate to another's and perhaps one day, although too late, awake to a clear comprehension of my inner condition? You say, 'Are not our affection and respect a surer foundation than love?' To this I reply, There is no firmer one than that which is laid by a true and earnest love, because there is no real love which is not based upon respect."

"Jenny, this affection would one day pass over to love; of that I am fully convinced."

"Let us remain a pair of faithful friends until it undergoes this transformation," returned Jenny, smiling; "and believe me, I really lack courage to become a Baroness, for a great deal is required for that. You are rich and of high rank; I, on the contrary, am a girl who has only her twenty years, her cheerful disposition, and her freedom-loving soul for her property. In order to make up my mind to allow myself to be bound by the ties of matrimony, it is absolutely necessary that I love with my whole heart."

"But, Jenny, there is nothing to hinder you from loving me," replied the Baron, smiling, for Jenny's playful way of taking the matter was a little contagious.

"Yes; a great hinderance, — that I do not yet love you. Perhaps I never can become attached to any one."

"And then you would live and die unmarried?"

"And independent. You see, Baron Fritz, my parents have given me such an education and such a view of life that I shall never from vanity, from a desire of wealth or any such motive, give my hand in marriage. They have taught me to love my independence, and given me knowledge, through which I shall always be able, even if it goes disastrously for them, to take care of myself, and as an unmarried woman to fill my place in life. You offer me wealth and rank, — things which flatter vanity and pride; but never shall it be said of Jenny that she sacrificed her freedom for these. She would lose respect for herself if she gave you her hand without love, and she would always be in doubt whether affection dictated her consent. Ah! do you know, it is no light thing for a girl without property to become a rich man's wife. She has to keep a strict account with herself not to be led by side interests. And now, Baron Fritz, are you sure that you are not angry or displeased with me?" Jenny offered him her hand with her beaming and friendly smile.

"Angry with you, Jenny? Never. Not a shadow of displeasure exists in my heart. With your simple candor you have made only a deeper impression upon me. I wish that all mothers could learn from yours how they ought to educate their girls. This conversation has not changed anything in our former friendly relation to each other? You are still my friend and sister, I am your brother, — is it not so?"

"Most assuredly. I shall always remain the same."

"Good! Now, if friendship should one day change to love, then I will resume this conversation, and once more ask you to be my guide on life's stony road."

"Yes, *if!* otherwise we will never resume it."

"That is clear. And now we will return to the interrupted school question."

"As abruptly as we left it. Ah, I have not forgiven the Baron for that sudden departure!"

"If you knew why I left, you would forgive me."

"Perhaps, — let me hear."

"When I received the letter from Stormhjelm, saying that his engagement was broken, and in every word of it discovered the bitterness which surged within him, I resolved to go to Stockholm immediately in order to restrain him, so far as stood in my power, from injuring Fröken von Krug. When I arrived there, I found Stormhjelm sick with an inflammation of the lungs. I took my place at his bedside, kept watch over all his acts, and when he was well brought him here with me, in order to have so much power over him that he could not spread any scandalous report about Fröken Albertine."

"Thanks! Now you are the former Baron Fritz."

"Ah! what does it avail? You will not become the former Jenny for that!"

"O fie! you are already breaking our agreement."

"Forgive me; it shall not occur again."

"But tell me frankly, does the Count love Albertine?"

"In a certain sense. But it is not a love which springs from the heart; it is an inclination called forth entirely by the desire of gaining her in spite of the resistance he encountered. Had she not been attached to the Doctor, but taken an interest in Stormhjelm instead, this fancy would have limited itself to ordinary drawing-room attentions, and it would never have entered his mind to ask for her hand. As it was, his pride and self-love were wounded by her slighting him. The spirit of contradiction which prevails with Stormhjelm came into full play. He was determined to have just that which eluded him. If a thing is to have any value for him, he must conquer resistance and capture every advantage. The more she detested him, the stronger became his resolution to make her his wife, in spite of all obstacles. What is offered him he does not care to have; what is refused him excites his passion. Verily I do not know how I shall hit upon any means which can turn Erik's thoughts from Fröken Albertine. She constitutes the fixed idea around which his mind turns. If you think that he will give up the hope of yet forcing her to yield her consent, you do not know him. No! he is revolving plans in his head which are neither noble nor honorable; but he would not hesitate to execute them for the furtherance of his designs."

Again sleigh-bells were heard, and Jenny wondered who it could be. At the same moment the door opened, and the Majorskan, Minna, Ernst, and Arvid entered.

"Goodness, mamma! is it you? And I did not expect you until to-morrow forenoon!" exclaimed Jenny.

"Good evening!" said the Majorskan to the Baron; then she turned to Jenny. "Yes. Was I not good to come to-night, so that I can be rested by to-morrow and able to help you?"

"You are always as good as you can be, Malin lilla," whispered Jenny, kissing her mother.

In a little while Jenny had arranged a tea-table before the fire, and around it sat the Majorskan with her sons, Minna, and the Baron. Jenny poured tea for them, and the meal passed in joy and merriment. Jenny observed that Arvid was now as light-hearted and childish as before his grand passion for Albertine, and she concluded that it was entirely extinguished. It seemed to her, besides, that Ernst looked paler than usual, was more silent, and had a more anxious expression than when he was at home

the last time. She also saw evident traces of tears on her mother's face, and a certain shade of melancholy lay behind her smile. Minna appeared happier than she had ever seen her since she parted from Albertine.

"Arvid, — I see how it is with him; he has forgotten Albertine, and is very much pleased with Minna. As far as that boy is concerned," thought Jenny, as she attended to her tea-urn, "I know him by heart; but look at Ernst! his face wears an expression this evening which is very hard to decipher, and he is not likely to have any great desire to initiate me into the secret, — that I know by experience. A more close-mouthed barbarian than he does not walk in a pair of boots. The only being he deems worthy to obtain a glimpse into his heart is mamma. But what in the world is the matter with Malin herself? She looks as if something bad had happened to her. Only have patience; she will certainly speak of all her troubles to-night. And Minna! she looks as animated as if she thought of laying siege to the hearts of all the three young gentlemen. Can it be that the girl has been seized with a spirit of coquetry? Never mind, Jenny; you will know what all this means, and that before another sunset."

The Baron had gone home, and all the rest of the family at Rönby had retired, when we find the Majorskan sitting on a sofa and Jenny on a stool at her feet.

"These three days that you have been away seem to me very rich in events," said Jenny, caressing her mother's chubby little hand.

"They have certainly been so to me," replied the Majorskan; "but to you, my child? What can have happened here at home?"

"Ah, all sorts of good things! but you are not to know about that before you have told me what weighs upon your dear heart. My poor beloved Malin, you look so troubled!"

"God be praised, I have you, Jenny! I shall feel better after I pour out my troubles to you, and you tell me whether you think that I acted right."

"Whether you acted right? what a question! Just as if you could ever act wrong."

"Dear Jenny, we are all liable to commit mistakes, and from mistakes arise acts which deviate from the right."

"True, but you are not in the habit of letting the impulse of the moment govern you; on the contrary, you are guided by reason in all your actions."

"Not always, Jenny. But to the point. When Minna and I reached W——, we went as usual to your father's aunt, the Öfverstinnan K——. The old lady was just the same as ever, cordial and friendly. When we had taken our breakfast and I was to go out with Minna, Aunt K—— requested to speak a few words to me alone.

"'Do you know, Malin,' said she, 'I have something to tell you which pains me; but it is better for you to hear it from me than from any one else.'

"'Dear aunt,' exclaimed I, alarmed, 'nothing has happened to Ernst? is he sick?'

"'No, dear Malin, nothing has happened, neither is he sick; but he has given occasion to talk, and, in his capacity of teacher, has caused much displeasure because he forgets that such a person must not set a bad example.'

"'What has he done? I asked, and my heart contracted with a violent pang.

"'He has fallen in love with one of the travelling singers who appear at T——'s Café. He spends all his leisure moments there, walks quite openly with her on Sundays; and she takes his arm just as if she were his betrothed. All the gossiping women in town have come here to take on about it. The Rector of the school also called on me the other day, and made a long speech full of accusations against Magister

Qvickfelt. I made up my mind to talk to Ernst the next time I saw him. When he came, I mentioned all that I had heard; and then he became angry and declared that he had the right to marry whom he chose, without needing to ask leave of tale-bearing women, or the Rector either. "Yes, God preserve us! of course you have," answered I, and began to speak of other things. Now, dear Malin, I have told you all about it, so that you may be able to make things right.'

"With this, Aunt K—— and I separated. You can never believe, Jenny, with what a heavy heart I went to visit Ernst, who was completely ignorant of my arrival; for, as you know, I had not written to him about it. It was about twelve o'clock when I rang his door-bell. The girl informed me that he was out, and could probably be found at T——'s Café. I returned home for Minna, and we both went to the café to take a cup of chocolate and a tart. I wished to see with my own eyes whether he was there, and also what effect my appearance would have on him. When we entered, we found him there. He sat with his elbow resting on the table, and was talking to a young girl. At the sound of our steps he turned round, and when he saw me he colored, rose, and came towards us. The girl remained sitting. Ernst conducted us to another table and ordered chocolate. In the mean time I gained an opportunity of looking at the person he had been conversing with. It was a young woman of four or five and twenty, tall and slender, but with no especial bearing. She had a Greek profile, regular features, and a coiffure arranged in the antique style. Besides, there was something bold and artful in her expression, which offended my eyes. I asked Ernst who she was. He looked confused and answered: 'She is a German singer, and as such has supported herself several years in Sweden.' I cannot tell you how troubled I felt when I regarded this woman. But as I have once for all made it a rule not to allow myself to be governed by my prejudices, I resolved not to pass any judgment upon her until I had formed one from what I could learn through the woman herself. In short, we left the café. Ernst bowed politely, nay, very courteously to the singer, and accompanied us around town. We took dinner at Aunt K——'s, and in the afternoon, when she had gone to take a nap, Minna and Lotta D——, who is with aunt, went to make some purchases which they did not wish me to see. Ernst and I were alone. Faithful to my habit, I did not mean to ask any questions. But I realized that, with his reserved disposition, he would never give me that confidence unless I introduced the subject. Just as I was considering how I should proceed, so as not to hurt his feelings, he turned to me with the question, —

"'For what reason, mother, did you go to the café?'

"'I went there, dear Ernst, because I wished to meet you, and I had been told that I should find you there.'

"'Admit that Aunt K—— has trumped up a fine story about me.'

"I told him frankly what the old lady had said. He listened to me in silence, but changed color incessantly while I was speaking. I finished my account with the words, —

"'And now, Ernst, I expect you to tell me candidly what I ought to believe of all this; whether you really love the young singer, upon what footing you stand with her, what promises you have given, and what sort of a woman you consider her to be.'

"Ernst seized my two hands, and faltered with deep emotion, —

"'You good, angelic mother, not to add a single word of reproach!' He kissed my hands, and we both remained silent a long time; for we were too agi-

tated to say anything. Then he began to speak of his attachment with all the ardor of a young man of twenty-four. Mademoiselle Gertrude Scheiber — that is her name — he described as an unfortunate and suffering woman, with all possible noble and elevated qualities; her fate had excited his compassion, her beauty his love. In short, my poor boy was perfectly smitten with the foreign girl, of whose early life and character he knew nothing, except what she herself told him. He desired to raise her above an unhappy fate, and make her his wife.

"Ah, Jenny, your poor Malin never felt so miserable as while she was listening to her son's confession. If I could have believed that this woman was really such as he described her, I should have pitied her deeply, and without any hesitation have opened my arms to embrace her as a daughter; but as it was, my instinct told me that he was deceived. Still not a single word of accusation against her passed my lips; for I knew but too well that it would only have been to pour oil on fire. When he finished, I merely said, —

"'But, Ernst, you cannot marry for many years yet, and, besides, you ought to try to become better acquainted with her. Your present salary is no more than you need for yourself, and you would only drag her and yourself into poverty if you married.'

"'I have considered all that; consequently it is not my intention to unite our fates until I can offer her an independent and comfortable position in life, and therefore I have never spoken of my designs.'

"'But in the mean time it will not do for you to endanger your future by your constant visits to the café; nor does it seem right for you to allow the woman you intend to marry to continue to sing in a public place and be the object of all the liberties men consider themselves entitled to take with such a girl.'

"'Ah, mother, I have thought a good deal upon that, but —'

"'But you have realized that you could not ask your mother to take a person into her house whom you yourself have only known a few months, and whose adventurous career gives one a right to doubt the purity of her character. Your own fine feelings must have told you that a woman who spends her life in a café, even if ever so unfortunate, cannot possess that innocent freshness and purity which is required in the daily companion of your sister. Is it not true, Ernst, that your reason has told you this?'

"He made no reply; he did not wish to assent, and he could not deny.

"'But,' I resumed, 'in order that you may never accuse me of being led by prejudice or any such motive, I will propose to you to pay Mademoiselle Scheiber's board at Follby with Fru Molin. She has no children; she is a noble and upright woman, with a warm interest for all who are unfortunate, and is just such a person as is needed to comprehend and judge this character, so strange to us both.'

"'Fru Molin?' stammered Ernst. 'She lives full seven miles from here."

"'Yes, and this is one reason more, for you will then have an opportunity to examine your own feelings; and Fru Molin, during her daily intercourse with Mademoiselle Scheiber, can become thoroughly acquainted with her, and at the same time give her an idea of those domestic and womanly virtues which she now only knows by name. If you are satisfied with this proposition, Ernst, I will myself speak of it to Mademoiselle Scheiber, and tell her that I, your mother, will do everything for her that my small means admit of.'

"I will pass by Ernst's expressions of gratitude, and all the praise he lavished upon me. Ah, it was a painfully sweet moment! The following day, before the

omnibus in which Arvid was to come arrived, I resolved to have matters settled with Mademoiselle Scheiber, and therefore went out quite early. As she lived in the same house where the café was, I had no difficulty in finding her. Two flights up they showed me to a door which led to Mademoiselle Scheiber's room. I opened it and entered; but it would be in vain for me to attempt to describe the appearance of this apartment, which was occupied by the young woman. All the chairs were covered with clothes. On the table stood a waiter, upon which was a little coffee-set, and beside it a wash-basin, etc. I had entered without knocking, and was received by a voice which screamed out in a rather unfriendly tone, —

"'Who is it that comes in without knocking?'

"I turned my eyes in the direction from whence the sound came, and saw the young singer lying on the sofa wrapped in a dressing-gown and with a smoking-cap on her head, right in the midst of clothes and music which were strewn about her. Without making any long introduction, I explained the reason of my visit. I told her that my son commiserated her situation, and that I desired to offer her my aid and my slight protection. I did not mention Ernst's attachment. She listened to me in silence, but when I proposed to her to go into the country, she threw her head back and declared that she was not willing to accept my offer. She did this insolently, and added that she saw plainly that my intention was to remove her from Ernst, but that she would not allow herself to be caught in the snare. She intended to stay where she was, as she earned sufficient, and did not need to busy herself in the country.

"I went away troubled to my very soul, and on my return home found Ernst awaiting me. I gave him the answer his Gertrude had given me, and he — "

The Majorskan paused.

"Mamma, has Ernst forgotten himself toward you?" exclaimed Jenny, with crimson cheeks.

"No; he thought my words had not been delicate enough. For the first time in my life I experienced the grief of being wounded by one of my children; but when Ernst saw the impression his words had made upon me, he repented and asked me to pardon him. He resolved to make an attempt himself to induce her to accept my offer. She refused on the ground that she was too proud to receive favors. Only with the greatest difficulty did I succeed in prevailing upon him to accompany me here, for he considered himself unable to leave her so alone; but he was finally moved by my prayers and entreaties. Now, Jenny, you have heard all that I have to communicate. Tell me, how do you think that I have acted?"

"Ah, mamma, you have now as always acted magnanimously, wisely, and lovingly; with what mildness and consideration have you not proceeded, and if anything in the world can restore Ernst to reason and a sense of his duty, it is your way of handling the matter. It is plain to be seen, from what has transpired, that that woman has captivated him by the part which she has acted, and which is by no means her own. Everything seems to conspire so to infatuate him that he will be led into an unhappy marriage."

"So have I thought," said the Majorskan, sighing, "but how counteract this evil? To say anything about her is only to place her in a suffering light, and increase his compassion still more."

"Well, well, Malin lilla, do not be so terribly sad. We will hope for the best from his visit at home, and if I know you rightly, you charming Malin, Herr Magister will return completely cured of his love-fever."

"God grant that you may be right,

ıny! I was so oppressed and sor-
before I could tell you of my
ıs; now they seem to me less
and I again feel hope and cour-
try to overcome them, and with
ıssistance to restore Ernst to him-

hope so too; therefore, you good,
mamma, throw away all thoughts
ıt for a moment, and console your-
th the idea that we now have the
home and safe from all tempta-
I have an extraordinary piece of
to communicate. It has always
l to you — has it not? — that I was
homely. And, to tell the truth, I
hought the same." Jenny looked
ɔvously at her mother. "That
ion was probably the reason why
ve me such an education as would
me to get along in the world
t marrying; or how was it?"

, no, dear child! if you had been
o beautiful, I should still have
ɔd you in the same way. The
all my efforts has been to cul-
your understanding and enable
comprehend that you have a des-
› fulfil in life; and in either
whether married or unmarried,
to realize how little right you
o waste your time in inactivity,
of doing your duty towards God,
f, and your fellow-beings by trying
ɔfit them through your work. Ah,
ıny, I have wished to make of you
ɔpendent, thinking being, one fully
›f the great responsibility a woman
ıpon herself when she marries. I
to teach you that marriage never
ɔo be regarded as a means of sup-
ıut as the most important and
tous act in life. This, my child,
› ground of my course of action."
d your Jenny would have so liked
respond to your desires! She
ıave liked to become all that you
to make of her, but alas! nature
ven her a multitude of faults.

Let us return to the great news. Look at me, Malin, and tell me, do you not perceive an expression of pride, of self-satisfaction, on my brow? is there nothing in my looks which indicates that I have quite suddenly gained a better opinion of my appearance?"

"No, you little goose, you are just the same as ever," answered her mother, smiling.

"That is too bad. I had hoped that on my brow would stand written in large words, 'Jenny has had a lover.'"

"A lover!" exclaimed the Majorskan, laughing.

"Ah, dear Malin, do not laugh so incredulously at the idea that I have had a lover. To speak seriously, mamma," continued Jenny, in an earnest tone, "what do you think? Baron Fritz has actually proposed to me, offered me his hand and his affections, and has dazzled me with the brilliant possibility of becoming mistress of the stately Stjernebro. I have had before my gaze the prospect of this splendid property, with all the resources it offers for benefiting and helping the needy." Jenny leaned her head on her hand, and paused.

"Well?"

The young girl threw her head up with the peculiar vivacity which distinguished her, fixed her eyes on her mother with a mischievous expression, and asked, smiling, —

"Well, Malin lilla, what do you suppose my decision was? Just think if you had given a betrothal party this Christmas, and been able to say my son-in-law, Baron Silfverkrona, or my daughter, the Baroness! How would you have liked that?"

"Not much, I fear, for then Jenny would have allowed herself to be guided by worldly motives, and it would have proven that she had not thought of the importance of the step she had taken."

"But how do you think that Jenny has acted?"

"I think that she has not cared to become a Baroness," replied the Majorskan, caressing her daughter's head.

"And you have guessed right," said Jenny, whose face again assumed a serious expression. "I have a sincere regard for Fritz, but experience has taught me that this affection is forced back when any other object makes a more vivid impression upon me. I have still my dawning fancy for the Doctor in fresh remembrance, and, to speak frankly, it has left a certain void which I am afraid may one day be filled by a deeper and more earnest attachment. I know well enough that it would have been more romantic if I had tried to convince myself that I cherished an unhappy love for the Doctor, that I should never be able to love again, and in this conviction had married from friendship; but, as you know, mamma, I am not romantic, for I live in reality with my whole soul, and therefore I thought, 'No, Jenny, until you become deeply attached you must not marry, and as you are not at all in love with the Baron, you cannot be his wife.' I told him all this, and my refusal became a still firmer link in the friendship we entertain for each other, and in which courtship has changed nothing."

"You have acted right, Jenny, and I feel both proud and happy over you."

"Thanks, beloved Malin!"

"Now tell me, did this refusal cost you any struggle?"

"Yes, for a moment my vanity and self-love had an active contest with my feelings. The former was dazzled by the prospect of coming into possession of wealth and rank, and my self-love felt all the intoxication of becoming the most aristocratic lady in the whole district. But I asked them to be so good as to let me retain my reason. After I had resigned all that glory they grumbled within me in the most shameful manner, but I turned a deaf ear, and now I am *quite* pleased with myself."

"And as happy and contented with your lot as before the tempting offer?"

"Yes, quite; how could I be otherwise when I have you, you pearl among mothers!"

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Christmas eve was over, and second day Christmas * had come. Then there was always a large party at Stjernebro. The neighbors from Rönby, together with the minister and his family, took dinner there; in the afternoon other guests arrived. They were all invited to the ball, and were never accustomed to leave Stjernebro until the fourth day.

Count Stormhjelm had promised to spend the holidays at Stjernebro, as his parents and sister were to remain in Italy through the winter. The old Count had a lung complaint, for which the physicians prescribed a warmer climate.

After dinner, while the old people sat down stairs, chatting quite at their ease, the young folks had gone up on the second floor to enjoy the ever-new pleasure of looking at all the splendor from former times. The minister had several young daughters between sixteen and twenty-five years of age, besides three sons, all of whom were students. While the rest of the young people swarmed around the rooms, laughing and talking, Minna remained in the picture-gallery before the portrait of the young lady, on the frame of which the Baron had written her name, when the Professorskan asked him who it was.

Minna's eyes were riveted upon the beautiful countenance as if she had not the power to take them from it. She was too much absorbed in its contemplation to notice that all the others had left the gallery and that only she and Count Stormhjelm remained. What drew Minna's attention to this portrait was at first its beauty, and then, when she had re-

* They keep two days for Christmas in Sweden.

garded it longer, the resemblance between its features and Doctor Bergström's. Finally it seemed to her that it was his face, only more delicate, finer, and younger. In the midst of the reflections this likeness called forth, she was startled by these words, uttered close by her, —

"Is not that a striking resemblance?"

Minna turned her head a little, and saw the Count leaning back in a gilded easy-chair directly behind her. There was something careless in the tone, and in Count Erik's whole position, which plainly showed that he did not consider it necessary to pay any especial respect to Minna, the former lady's-maid.

A blush of indignation suffused her cheeks, for her womanly instinct told her that it was his intention to let her feel that in his eyes she was nothing but a lady's-maid, even if she had been invited to his cousin's.

Minna, who, like Albertine, had only had pride and vanity for an example, began from childhood to exercise these feelings, in spite of her subordinate position. In her they had taken the form of coquetry, love of dress, the desire for outward advantages, and a defiant disposition. If it had not been for her natural need of loving, and her intrinsically good heart, which made her devote herself to Albertine with an exclusive affection, she might, with her proclivity to vanity and self-love, as well as the ease with which she could play any part, have become a frivolous and dangerous woman. As it was, this affection for Albertine had saved her from these faults in a great measure, but her character had received an irremediably crooked direction.

Minna gave the Count a proud look without answering, and then turned to leave the gallery.

Now it was the Count's turn to feel wounded by the former lady's-maid's manner. He rose from his half-reclining position and resumed, —

"Do you not think, Ma'm'selle Ekeberg, that there is an astonishing likeness between that portrait and the Doctor who was here last summer?"

"Yes, I do," was Minna's answer, as she continued her course to leave the gallery; but the Count, who felt irritated by the answer of "that little spitfire," as he in thought called her, hastened after her.

"One moment, *ma'm'selle*, if you please." The word "ma'm'selle" was uttered in an inimitable way.

"We have nothing to say to each other," answered Minna coldly, and without stopping. The Count laid his hand on her arm, saying in a haughty tone, —

"You are right; I only desire to ask you a question. When does Fröken Albertine intend to marry her lover, that gardener's son?"

"That question she can best answer herself."

"I suppose it is the embassies which you formerly undertook between the Doctor and the Fröken which have made you so ungracious to me; but you are wrong, that ought not to make us hostile towards each other."

"You are mistaken, I am not hostile towards you; you are to me entirely indifferent, now that you can no longer make Albertine unhappy."

"Immensely obliged," replied the Count, mockingly. "Fröken Albertine sustained a great loss when you left her service."

"I am well aware of that myself."

Minna's answer had the misfortune to excite the Count's anger. He had tried to humiliate her, but she had opposed all his attacks with an icy coldness. He felt an actual aversion to the young girl because he regarded her as an ally of the Doctor's.

"Do you know, *Ma'm'selle Minna*, what I was just now thinking of? That we shall finally hate each other."

"Impossible! I have not a sufficiently

high opinion of you for that. The person we hate must possess the ability to injure or offend, and this ability you lack."

They had, during this conversation, come into a little cabinet, furnished in the style of the fourteenth century. Some of the young people were assembled there.

Arvid was looking at a casket, a genuine relic in the family from olden times. The Silfverkrona coat-of-arms was engraved on a plate, and under it stood, "1391."

"In those days it was worth while to be a nobleman," said Arvid.

"Yes," answered Minna. "Then nobility signified something more than in our time. Now it is an empty word, at which the masses laugh."

All present looked at Minna, and Jenny threw a peculiar, mischievous glance at her cousin. The Count's eyes flashed with indignation, and he left the room.

Jenny whispered to Minna, —

"It will not do for you to show the Count your ill-will so openly; it is not even courteous."

"Dear Jenny, I intend, after all you mentioned that the Baron said about the Count, to summon all my power to provoke him. If he once becomes thoroughly enraged at me, he will forget his hatred to Albertine and leave her in peace. This is all that I desire."

This desire of Minna's was realized that very evening. The Count was so irritated at the former lady's-maid, the Major's niece, that he could not keep from thinking of her.

The ball was at its height, and extremely animated. Jenny was the personification of youthful joy. She danced with her whole soul, not for the sake of dancing, but because it amused her. They struck up a wild galop, and at the head of it were Jenny and the Baron. The Count had only taken a very inconsiderable share in the dance, and now stood leaning against a door-post surveying the couples as they whirled by. His gaze lingered long upon Jenny and the Baron, for it was a real pleasure to see them, so well did they dance; but suddenly he directed it to another pair. It was Arvid and Minna. The young Cadet's face shone with joy, and Minna looked very much enlivened. The violent exercise had given a higher color to her cheeks, and her black eyes flashed like two stars.

"She is deucedly pretty, the Major's niece," said an old Captain, who stood at a little distance from the Count with some gentlemen, looking at the dancers. "And what small feet she has!"

"Yes, she is very pretty," said another. "The Major is not likely to have her on his hands very long, for she will probably marry soon."

"Herr G——, the proprietor of the large manufactory at Hall, declared a little while ago, that he had never seen a sweeter girl."

"I should n't wonder if he was thinking of her."

The Count had heard these words with the same feelings a man always experiences when any one is praised whom he detests. He considered the gentlemen destitute of taste, and revolted at the thought of Minna's becoming Herr G——'s wife.

At last the galop was over, and the dancers filed by him as they went into the saloon. Just as Arvid and Minna passed, she said, —

"In my opinion Count Stormhjelm is ugly; he looks stupid and conceited."

This only was wanting to make the Count perfectly furious, and it was with him just as with every one who is in company with a person that he cannot endure; he could not turn his eyes from Minna for the whole evening, and he found her insipid and coquettish.

Coquetry, — she was accused of that by all; even the Majorskan thought, —

"I am afraid Minna is coquettish."

---

A few days after the holidays the Majorskan went into Ernst's room.

Since second day Christmas they had been to one ball after the other, and the third day after New Year's they had danced at Rönby. After all this excitement came a slight cessation.

The Majorskan heard with anxiety that Ernst thought of returning to W——, and for this reason she resolved to have a conversation with her son in regard to the interest which drew him there.

He was usually in the habit of staying at Rönby until the end of January, going back at the beginning of the term; but now he wished to leave home the first of the month.

When the Majorskan entered, she found Ernst engaged in writing.

"Do I disturb you?" asked she.

"Ah, it is you, mother! — No, not at all; on the contrary, we were both led by the same thought, for I was just going down to have a little talk with you." Ernst seized his mother's hand, adding with emotion, —

"Admit, mother, that you have had many anxious and troubled moments on my account during the last few weeks."

"I do not deny it, dear Ernst; but it was not I who should take up the subject of my grief, — it was you, my son." The Majorskan seated herself.

"But do so, nevertheless; speak of it to me in your own simple way. I think that the sound of your voice and your loving words will bring me into a little more harmony with myself."

Ernst sat down beside his mother.

"Tell me, in the first place, do you consider me to be a person who is influenced by any prejudice?"

"No, I certainly do not; but I think that you, like all persons who have not gone through misfortune and trial, cannot judge those who have struggled with adversity their whole lives through without being unjust, because your experience has not taught you how imbittered the soul becomes in the struggle with material need. You, mother, have lived in a limited sphere, and have only seen poverty here in the country, which, however terrible it may appear, cannot be compared to the misery it presents in a large town. In consequence of this you think, 'Why not accept a respectable situation, even if ever so humble, rather than travel around the world as a singer, and make one's self the object of every man's familiarity?'"

"Perhaps you are right in part, but not in all. Although I really think that an humble but honorable service ought to be preferred by any woman of fine feeling to an itinerant life, I realize perfectly that there can be circumstances which force a poor girl, who has not learned anything, to seek her income with the voice nature has given her. I am far from passing judgment upon one who has been forced into such a career by misfortune; but — "

"But, in spite of all this, you would feel very unhappy if I married Gertrude?"

"I cannot deny it."

"You see, mother, there we have your prejudice."

"Ernst, have I really acted as if I allowed prejudice to direct me? Have I not tried to do all that I could for Gertrude, so that both you and I should have an opportunity rightly to judge her character? Has a single accusing word passed my lips?"

"No, you dear mother, certainly not; but you misunderstood the nobleness and disinterestedness of her refusal."

"How deluded you are, Ernst, to talk

so! If it had been you who made the proposal, then I too would have judged her behavior as you do; but, Ernst, as the proposition was made by me, she ought not to have felt offended by it. If she really possessed the noble character you attribute to her, she would never have responded to my offer with such scorn, and such a base calculation of the motives of my conduct. No, Ernst, no noble woman would lower herself to wound and insult one who kindly and voluntarily reached her a helping hand. Believe me, and some day you will yourself learn that I am right: this woman is an adventuress from inclination; her whole behavior indicates it, and never will any domestic happiness bloom at her side. Ah, Ernst, listen to your mother, who loves you so sincerely! Be on your guard; that girl will be your misfortune! If my love is of any value to you, then promise me not to bind yourself to her by any vow, but note the fact that she prefers to live at a café rather than in a respectable house! My son, does not your own sense tell you that just this shows that she does not realize the humiliation of her position? If she had truly depended on it for her living, she would have embraced the proposal I made with joy. Yes, had she been attached to you with a woman's devotion, she would have eagerly accepted every opportunity which was offered her to ennoble and cultivate her soul, as well as to leave a career which public opinion stamps as dubious. Reflect closely upon what I have now said. Examine her conduct, her habits, and her whole life, such as it presents itself to you, and then ask your heart and your reason if you can become happy with her! And now, my son, I have expressed my opinion; it is your happiness I seek, and if it could be promoted by your union with Gertrude, everything unpleasant that I might experience personally would be buried in my own breast."

Ernst kissed his mother's hand, and answered, —

"Thanks, you dear good mother! I will consider your words."

---

The following morning Ernst did not speak of going to town. The days passed, and he remained at Rönby. It is true he was more silent and reserved than usual, but the Majorskan, who saw plainly that he struggled against the voice of his heart which drew him to W——, redoubled her tenderness, and one day, after a visit to the minister's, she said, —

"I have spoken to our kind pastor. If Mademoiselle Scheiber should be disposed, both he and his wife have promised to receive her into their house. Would you like me to write and make her such a proposal? In order that her pride may not be wounded, I will say that she can have a situation there as a companion. She shall never learn that I pay her board, but we shall thus gain an opportunity of judging of her morals."

"Mamma, you are an angel of goodness and love!" exclaimed Ernst.

The Majorskan wrote a friendly and considerate letter, which she allowed Ernst to read and send to town; but the messenger returned with the answer from Gertrude, that she was not at all inclined to accept any situation, but intended to remain where she was until she had a home of her own. In addition she told the Majorskan to leave her in peace, and hoped that Ernst would have sufficient independence to remain faithful to his love, without her needing to become a slave to his mother's caprices. The only home she could receive until she was married would be the house of his parents, and as this was not offered her, she intended to stay in the place she then occupied.

Ernst's first impression was something

resembling anger at the tone in which she responded to his mother's letter; his next, on the other hand, acknowledged Gertrude to be right. But when at that moment he raised his eyes and met his mother's mild, sad glance, when he saw the tears in those eyes which from his tenderest childhood had smiled at him so lovingly, then he blushed before himself, and while he regarded his mother's pure features, so chaste, so truly womanly, a reflection of her heart, and compared her to Gertrude, who had kindled his passion and infatuated his judgment with her beauty and her voluptuous face, — then he fancied that he saw two beings of an entirely opposite origin. It seemed to him as if one had been his good, the other his evil genius, and he experienced a feeling of bitter pain at the thought of all the love his mother had shown him, of the forbearance with which she had treated a weakness which grieved her deeply; he took her hand, saying, —

"Forgive your son; he promises that you shall feel satisfied with him!"

"Thanks!"

"In the choice between you and her there is no longer any doubt. You are my good angel!"

---

The days which remained of Ernst's stay at home he spent in his own room, in order to gain a conquest over his weak heart.

The day before his departure the Major came up to him. The father had the evening before, at Herr G——'s, been in company with some citizens, and heard them say that his son spent most of his time in a café, and that he was in love with a travelling singer.

"My dear Ernst," said the Major, with a stern look, "I have heard fine things about you. They say that you lead a jolly life there in town. What the devil is the meaning of these stories about an adventuress, a strolling singer, to whom you are said to be betrothed? It seems you intend to reward your mother beautifully for all the care and love she has bestowed upon your education. I tell you what it is, boy, if you cause her grief, I shall consider you an actual wretch, unworthy of bearing my name. How much truth is there in all this? I wish to have an account of it."

"Father," answered Ernst, seriously, "I admit that I have been guilty of these charges, but never shall I forget that my folly has cost mother tears; and rest assured, the remembrance of her clemency, even while she suffered from my error, will be a strong counterpoise to every temptation."

"Well, well! Yes, I should think that you had a mother whose equal does not exist. Now tell me the whole of that precious story." The Major seated himself, and Ernst related all that concerned his love for Gertrude. The Major interrupted him every now and then with a violent oath. Ernst finished with these words, —

"Father, I should be contemptible in my own eyes, if, after all that mother has done for me, I could still cling to an attachment which would be a bitter sorrow to her and you, as well as a source of misery to myself."

The father gave him his hand in silence; he then left the room and went down to the saloon where he met the Majorskan.

"Thanks, Malin, for bringing Ernst to his senses; you are a crown among women, and the boy would deserve his five-and-twenty stripes if he ever forgot all the love he owes you."

But Ernst never did forget it.

---

March, with its lengthened days, its midday sun, which sent forth a few genial

rays, and its snow-white mantle, had come as the herald of spring.

Ernst was engaged in his school. He did not visit the café, and had arrived at the positive conviction that his mother was right when she regarded Gertrude as an adventuress. To this conclusion experience had also aided him; for when Gertrude saw that she no longer derived any particular advantage from Ernst, she directed her gaze to those who had more money and were less scrupulous in their habits.

Arvid had returned to Carlberg, and the Baron, with Jenny's assistance, had established an industrial school for girls, which was in full activity under Jenny's superintendence. Besides, he had begun to work zealously to improve the condition of his dependants, relieve the poor, and attend to his estate, which had been badly neglected. In short, our Baron had set out to be a useful and active person.

Count Stormhjelm continued to stay at Stjernebro. Why? I do not believe that any one could tell. He talked continually about going down to his country-seat, but yet he remained. Sometimes he went over to his father's stately Hallvik, which was a few miles distant, stayed there a few days, and then returned to Stjernebro. Sometimes he spoke of going to Stockholm, but still he delayed week after week. "Was he in love?" people asked, and the ladies of the neighborhood went through the list of all the young girls that there were; but the Count did not devote himself to any one of them. On the contrary, he seemed to avoid them and kept himself at a distance with a *hauteur* which did not by any means inspire the young ladies with the hope of being the object which detained him. Finally they became tired of guessing; he mourned over the broken engagement. But that was not altogether probable, for the Count did not look sorrowful. Still let us no longer *dwell on him.*

It was a beautiful and sunny forenoon in March. Jenny had been on a visit of inspection to the new school, which was situated half-way between Rönby and Stjernebro. Just as she was about to return home, the Baron came. Jenny had her little velvet hood and her fur cloak on, and she had already left the school-room when she met the Baron in the entry.

"I was afraid of coming too late," said he. "I thought that you had gone, and that I should lose the pleasure of accompanying you home."

"The loss would not have been so great," answered Jenny, smiling, "as that extreme pleasure is offered you twice a week."

"That would not have hindered me, however, from being inconsolable if I had missed it."

"There, now you begin with compliments, and that conflicts with our agreement. If you continue in that way, I will annul our contract of friendship."

"Take my arm," said the Baron, "and let us conclude peace; I shall never say that it is pleasant to meet you. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, but the trouble is that you do not keep your word," replied Jenny, smiling, as she took his arm.

"If that is so, it proceeds from the fact that you make me forget everything except the pleasure of talking with you. There now, Fröken Jenny, we will talk no more about the matter. Do you know what they told me at Colonel ——'s yesterday when I was there?"

"No, I certainly do not."

"Why, they asserted that Herr G—— was on the point of proposing to Ma'mselle Ekeberg, and that you were going to marry —"

"Whom?"

"Stormhjelm."

Jenny began to laugh, like a merry and mischievous child.

"What a pity that the Count never

hit upon the idea of paying his addresses to me! I — "

"Well, would you accept him?" interrupted the Baron, hastily.

"Wait a little. Count Erik is handsome, that you cannot deny."

"I do not mean to dispute it," answered the Baron, bluntly.

"He is very wealthy, is he not?"

"But, good gracious, Fröken Jenny! you know all that; why then do you ask me?"

"Besides, he is a Count, — something which my gracious aunt places a very high value upon. I should certainly rise in her estimation if I became a Countess. Don't you believe it?" Jenny looked at the Baron with a roguish expression.

"Yes, I am fully convinced of it, but — "

"But you mean that if Jenny values wealth and rank so highly, she ought — "

"Not to have given me the mitten," completed the Baron.

"True, but I might perchance fancy that Count Erik is more attractive than Baron Fritz."

"Granted. Thus, if he proposed — "

"He would get — "

"A yes!"

"Not at all. I only thought it a pity that I have not had an opportunity of proving my love for the unmarried state by giving him the mitten."

"So you have tormented me a long time," said the Baron, with a smile. "But, jesting aside, you think then of living and dying unmarried?"

"I have certainly not made any such vow. It looks, however, as if I had more love for the unmarried state than I can have for any man."

"Just think, however, what a tedious life you would lead! When you become old, you will lose the joy of youth. Your parents will die, your brothers marry, and the property you inherit may perhaps be insufficient to maintain you comfortably. What will you then do? How empty and desolate is not the life of an old unmarried woman! I scarcely know any beings more to be pitied; they stand so alone."

"Good heavens, how you talk! You assert, then, that I shall have a tedious life as an old maid, but I am of another opinion. Let us proceed in order. I do not by any means think of becoming an old maid who sits and mourns for her youth and her departed hopes. No, I mean to be a cheerful and pleasant old lady, who likes to see youth and joy around her. You ask what I intend to do if I should have too little to live on. Why, I think of keeping school. Even if I have property, I intend to devote my life to some useful pursuit, and through my activity make it agreeable. Unmarried women are tiresome and peevish solely because they live in idleness."

"And you, Jenny, who are so full of life and joy, you believe that you could pass your days in the drudgery of instructing children. Admit that you are idealizing a little."

"Not at all; for if I did so I should make up my mind never to marry, I should go into raptures over the state of single blessedness, and exhaust myself in a sublime lamentation over your sex; but as it is, I do nothing of the kind. I say: If I can love somebody, and this somebody loves me, then I will marry; if not, then I will remain single, and as such try to be as useful as possible. It seems to me that this is truly sensible."

"But it would be still more sensible of you to marry."

"Granted; but rather than to marry simply for the sake of being married, I will set myself at keeping school."

"But what shall I do? Can you tell me that?"

"Marry."

"That seems impossible if you remain unmarried."

"Then plough your fields, speak at

the diet in behalf of the nation, and so we will continue to be good friends. You will come and see me, and then we can have a right pleasant time together in our old age."

"Yes, of course," answered the Baron, laughing; "and then we will call each other dear brother and dear sister."

"Precisely, and sometimes you will take me out to ride. You will drive me to church every Sunday through the winter."

"That is a pleasant prospect."

"I should think so. I will get a snuff-box and a little lap-dog to console me in my solitude."

"For God's sake, no snuff-box!"

"And why not?"

"If you begin to take snuff, you will have a very large nose."

Jenny burst into a ringing laugh.

"I have that already."

"One reason more for not making it any larger; but tell me frankly, how would you like to have me marry?"

"Why, I think that I would rather see you remain unmarried."

"Ah! then we have got a good way ahead."

"Yes; we are now at the forester's cottage," replied Jenny, laughing, "and I must go in and see about my little godson. Adieu! Are you coming over to Rönby this evening?"

"Most assuredly. I must be faithful to my old habits, else I might get out of them by the time you become a schoolmistress."

"And you a speaker in the diet. Welcome when you come!" With these words Jenny disappeared in the forester's dwelling.

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Let us now make a little visit to the Professorskan. The months which had passed so quickly at Rönby seemed to *Albertine* like centuries. It is true, her brother had returned the last of November, but the Professorskan, who considered that she had every reason to be displeased with her children, was, if possible, colder and stiffer than ever. The hours Albert spent at home were so tedious, — the conversation generally consisting of sarcasms, which her Grace sent to right and left in her sharp and cutting tone, — that the son began to wait upon his mother more and more seldom, and when it occurred, only for a short time. His visits were longer up with his father; but these he made in the evening.

Often, after the mother had retired, the brother and sister spent many agreeable and instructive hours with their father; but all this, however, was insufficient for poor Albertine, who was bound to her mother's side the day through. At home and abroad, on walks, everywhere and always, the Professorskan treated her daughter with the same severity, the same icy coldness. No word of love ever passed her lips, and there was no sign which indicated that she had any tender feeling for her daughter. In spite of all efforts on Albertine's part, nothing had a mollifying effect upon this mother, who considered herself so deeply aggrieved that she neither could forgive nor ought to forgive. This obduracy was reflected back on Albertine, so that she too became petrified, and repaid coldness with coldness.

The Professorskan had not mentioned a word about her son, about the report she had heard with regard to his journey and that Jewess. She considered it beneath her dignity to enter into conversation about such a person. Thus had time passed. It was in March.

Don Juan was being performed at the Royal Opera, and the Professorskan, who wished people to see that she kept up with her time, was always present. If she had followed her natural inclination, she would probably not have gone there, for she was not musical in the least.

Albertine and she had taken their places in their private box, and the Professorskan saluted her acquaintances with that stiff and imposing politeness which she considered in accordance with her rank and dignity.

President W——, belonging to the Professorskan's more intimate associates, was in the same box.

"Has your Grace observed that Albert is here this evening?" asked the President.

"No, I have not," replied her Grace, raising her opera glass to her eyes.

"Our young Justice sits in the first box nearest the stage."

Her Grace directed her glass there, and saw her son sitting behind two ladies, whose strongly marked features at the first glance gave indication that they belonged to the Israelitish race.

Albert bent down and talked very earnestly with the younger of the ladies. Her Grace flushed so deeply at this sight that the President ought to have seen the reflection of it in her neck. She took the glass from her eyes in silence.

"Does your Grace know who those ladies are?" asked the President.

"No, they are entirely unknown to me," was the answer.

Albertine had also directed her glass to her brother and his companions, and steadily regarded the younger lady.

"It is Mademoiselle Israelli, the engraver on stone, and it is said she is secretly betrothed to my friend Albert; but if this were so, your Grace would know it first of all."

"Herr President, it is one of the usual stories people make up, if a young man only shows himself polite to a lady. The whole absurdity of the report ought to appear, if one considers that that person can never become a suitable match for my son."

"I have made the same answer, but the young man is always seen in her company, and people are prone to believe the worst."

Some ladies now entered the next box; they were acquainted with the Professorskan. Salutations were exchanged; they all expressed their joy at seeing each other, etc. Then the new-comers made a round with their opera glasses, and when the older lady stopped at the last box, she said to the Professorskan, —

"My dear Sophie, there sits your son with his *fiancée*. When is the betrothal to be announced?"

"My son is not betrothed to that lady, and never will be. All that they say about it is a groundless report," was the Professorskan's answer.

The overture now began, and conversation ceased.

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The following forenoon the Justice entered his mother's cabinet. The Professorskan responded to his greeting with a stiff bend of the head, and, turning to Albertine, she said, —

"You can go and practise; I have something to say to your brother."

Silent as an automaton, Albertine went out into the saloon and seated herself at the instrument.

"Who were the ladies that you accompanied to the opera?" inquired her Grace, looking fixedly at her son.

Without the slightest embarrassment, and with an elevated head, he answered, —

"Mademoiselle Israelli and her aunt."

"Two Jewesses?"

"Yes, mother; two remarkably cultivated and amiable women."

"That is very fortunate for them, but does not change the circumstance that they are Jewesses."

"Certainly not," replied the Justice in his decided and inflexible voice. "I see no necessity of that circumstance being changed. With persons who possess culture and intellectual superiority, it makes

no difference whether they are Swedes, Chinese, or Jews."

"I do not need any instruction from you, neither do I desire it. Therefore show me the politeness of simply answering my questions. Conversation between us, except questions and answers, is not to be thought of. You have behaved too disrespectfully towards me for me to condescend to exchange views with you." Her Grace paused. Albert remained silent.

"I desire to know on what footing you can stand with such people?"

"I visit at their house, and entertain a deep admiration for Mademoiselle Israelli."

"You have the audacity to tell that to your mother, right to her face?"

"Why should I keep it to myself, when you must at any rate learn my intentions some time or other? I intend to ask for Mademoiselle Israelli's hand."

"You do?"

"Yes; each and all who know her must approve my choice."

"You do not even ask whether I approve it, whether you will obtain my sanction to such a union." The Professorskan's lips trembled, and she spoke in a smothered voice.

"As it is *I* who intend to marry, I should think that my own taste could alone decide in the matter."

"But I think you would have hard work to hunt up a son who entirely overlooks his mother, and is completely indifferent to her sanction. You are certainly the only one who can exhibit such a behavior."

"Very possible! The reason lies in the fact that there is no harmony between us, and therefore my actions become such as they are. You wish to rule, and I, as a *man*, do not consider that I ought to be a slave."

"It is well that you enlighten me with regard to our mutual position. And so you *really intend to ask for* that girl's hand?"

"Yes, it is my positive decision."

"Enough. We have nothing more to say to each other. You may go."

Albert rose, made a mute bow to his mother, and left the room.

The Professorskan sat motionless as a statue. Her breast heaved with suppressed grief, and a tear fell cold and solitary on the thin hand. It was evident that the Professorskan had now encountered a severe cross. But when Albertine entered a little while afterwards, no change was to be observed in her cold face. Later in the day some ladies called, and the Professorskan's manner was just the same as usual. The evening passed as stiff and tedious as ever.

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Three flights up in one of the small houses on Queen Street there was, at the time of our story, a pretty little abode. The first room one came into was a sort of small saloon, or large sitting-room, with three windows and three doors. One door led to the mistress's sleeping-room, the other to her aunt's.

The day after the conversation between the Professorskan and her son, a young lady of about twenty-two sat in the first room of the above-described suite. She was busily engaged in engraving.

At the first glance she seemed homely. The sharply hooked nose, the somewhat large mouth, the broad eyebrows, and dark complexion made her appearance rather unprepossessing; but if she looked up and fastened her large brown eyes on the beholder with a mild, rapt, and serious expression, then she became beautiful at once, and one fancied that this high, broad, and full brow was as lovely as a temple of thought, surrounded by the jet black hair, which like a dark cloud waved around her temples, neck, and shoulders, and gave a still more contemplative appearance to the arched brow. The irregularity of the rest of the fea-

tures disappeared, and it was impossible to understand how one could ever have considered her homely.

A ring at the door-bell caused her to raise her head and listen. She then heard a well-known voice ask the servant, —

"Is Mademoiselle at home?"

"Yes; please walk in."

A slight blush rose to the young lady's pale cheeks, and she sat motionless, with her gaze directed to the door which at that moment opened to admit Albert. After she had greeted him she said, —

"What brings you here at this time, when you are generally so occupied?"

"Now, as always, my longing to see you, Hagar," answered he, keeping Mademoiselle Israelli's hand in his; "perhaps also the inability to live longer without knowing what the future has to offer. A conversation with my mother yesterday has excited a burning desire to know how my life will shape itself."

"But, my friend, you cannot obtain any solution of life's enigma from me. We human beings do not control the future."

"Yes, in part. We have our fate in our own hands, and are not governed by chance. Upon our will, the power of our character, and the superiority of our intelligence depends our life."

"If that is the case, then you ought to be best able to answer the question you desire solved."

"Ah, Hagar, what I said had reference to the outer circumstances of our life, not to those which depend upon the feelings of others, not to the life of the soul. Regard me, Hagar! do I look like a man who lacks courage?"

"No! On the contrary, I have considered you to be one who would bear adversity with fortitude, and raise yourself above misfortune."

"And yet I am at this moment a poor coward, who stands with fear and trembling before a young girl, and awaits with dread the answer she will give him."

Albert had spoken in an agitated voice. He continued, with ardor, —

"Promise to listen to me with patience, with indulgence."

"I promise."

Both had seated themselves on a sofa.

"I need not speak of my childhood and home life to you, Hagar, — you know them both; but what you know is simply the effect which this bringing up has had upon my disposition and character. By nature stubborn and conceited, the constant example of these feelings only served to nourish them, and when I became a man, they were the prevailing ones, so that I considered myself to stand high above others through my superiority of mind, and regarded every obstacle as a slight affair, which I could overcome by the power of my indomitable will. Until last spring I had never acknowledged any one as my superior, but regarded myself as one more richly endowed than others; but then — then I learned that there were those who stood far above me. Do you know who taught me to doubt my own superiority?"

"All the distinguished men with whom you came in contact during your journey abroad. You then gained an opportunity of comparing your knowledge with theirs, and such a comparison unavoidably turned out to your own disadvantage, although nature has endowed you with unusual gifts."

"You are mistaken; it was my own father and *you* that I had to thank for the defeat my self-love suffered."

"My friend, you ought, however, to have known your *father* sufficiently well before."

"It ought to have been so, but such was not the case. As a child, I was never in any connection with him except to greet him at meals, and occasionally answer some question that he asked me. Besides, I regarded him as a simpleton,

who could not act sensibly unless directed by my mother. As a youth I attended to my studies, was seldom or never at home, but stayed at Upsala the year round. As a man I felt something almost resembling contempt for my father and his weak irresolute character; and when I finally saw that my mother and I should come in conflict about my independence, I resolved to try to approach him, and if possible to govern him by my will, so as to put a limit to my mother's despotism. Then came our journey; the daily intercourse, the frequent conversations with him opened such a wealth of knowledge to my gaze that with dismay I found myself to be a school-boy in comparison with him. No matter what subject I spoke of, he was at home, and explained everything with such clearness, and in so original a way, that I was amazed, and blushed at my own ignorance. To add to this, chance brought you and us together. My self-love had also given me a decidedly poor opinion of the female sex. This opinion was based upon the lack of common-sense I found in my mother, and the defective mental training she gave my sister. I regarded her method of education as the general one, and thought that when girls did not have, like Albertine, a brother who at leisure hours conveyed to them a little idea of true culture, they must be extremely ignorant and uncultivated in reality, with all their accomplishments! The amount of it was, that I considered woman a mere doll with an empty brain. Then you came and taught me that there are women so intellectually superior, endowed with so much genius, and who are so truly cultured, that they stand high above us, compelling us to acknowledge with humiliation that we are in many respects inferior to them. This, Hagar, was indeed humbling to my all-absorbing self-love. You soon became an object which exclusively occupied my thoughts. You engrossed my soul, and captivated my heart. The friendship I asked of you was only a mantle, under which warmer feelings concealed themselves, without my even being aware of it. One day I awoke from my delusion, and my heart told me that your friendship was entirely too little for me. Days and weeks have elapsed without my having the courage to say to you, Hagar, I love you with all the strength of my energetic soul, with all the steadfastness of my firm character. I shall never cease to love you, and whatever your heart may feel for me, you will be the one object of my love. Tell me, Hagar, what have I to hope? What answer do you give me?"

Hagar's cheeks had glowed while he was speaking, but when he finished, they became deadly pale. She fastened her large eyes upon him with a sad and earnest expression, saying, —

"Whatever answer my heart might give you, Albert, there is one hinderance, an insurmountable barrier between us, — *I am a Jewess!*"

"Hagar, if you love me only half as deeply as I love you, this hinderance will not exist, you will go over to the Christian faith."

Hagar smiled with an expression of pain.

"Do you think, Albert, that we can change our religious belief as easily as our clothes? I, for my part, have so deep a reverence for religion, so true a respect for every person's opinion on this sacred subject, that I never could be induced by any motive in the world to propose to any one to change the religion in which he had been brought up."

"Hagar, listen to me!" exclaimed Albert with passion. "Tell me first, do you love me? Answer me truly and frankly."

"Yes, I love you; but I have said to my heart, 'He must be your friend, your brother only.' I shall therefore love you only as such, for you do not belong to

my race and can never become my mate. You do not love the same faith and the same religious views that I love. We are in this respect strangers to each other. You would never be able to understand me, nor could I understand you, and yet it is indispensably necessary for a genuine love, a genuine happiness, in a married pair that their souls blend in unison on all subjects which the human mind has been accustomed to regard as holy."

"Then you reject me, Hagar! O, if you knew how I love, you would clearly understand how unhappy you make me! Hagar, if any one told me that I might call you my wife on condition that I adopted your faith, I would do it immediately. My love knows no limits; but what does your cold heart understand of all this?"

"My cold heart!" exclaimed Hagar, and her dark eyes flashed; "how do you know that it is cold? You think so, because there is one thing I place higher than my affection for you; but this only proves that I realize deeply that above us is God. You would immediately renounce the faith of your forefathers if you could thereby call me your wife. Albert, are you so little attached to a faith which ought to be incorporated with your soul and all your thoughts? If you have so little respect for the religion you have imbibed from childhood, that you can lay it aside with the same ease as a garment which incommodes you, then I pity you, for your moral worth rests upon a very insecure basis when it is only supported by reason, and in the moment of passion will never be victorious over temptation."

"O Hagar, you are cruel!" His voice was full of despair. "You then give me no hope, you reject me; yet I shall never have the power to transfer my love to any one else. You trample upon my heart and crush my life."

"Can I do otherwise?"

"Yes! you can become a Christian;* you can kneel with me before the same altar, worship the same God."

"We all worship the same God; but I can never become a Christian. Even should my weak heart break with grief over what I am obliged to renounce, I shall nevertheless live and die a Jewess."

Albert put his hand to his brow, and exclaimed with anguish, —

"You are perhaps the only Jewess in the world who would cling so persistently and enthusiastically to her faith, — and you I love even to madness!"

"Albert, cease to complain," whispered Hagar in a tender voice; "be a man, bear your fate as such, and bend your proud heart to necessity. Do not weary your soul by raving at the obstacles which you meet, but regain control over yourself. If it can be any consolation to you, then know that Hagar will never become the wife of any other, as she cannot become yours. Let us forget this conversation, and renew the friendship which is the only bond of union that can exist between us, and then life can again have many sweet moments."

"Never. If I am not allowed to hope that I may one day call you my wife, I must shun you."

Hagar said nothing; but her large eyes had an expression of acute grief. Albert rose, seized her two hands, and asked in a suppressed voice, —

"You thus give the death-blow to my happiness? So you are not willing to sacrifice any of your convictions for it?"

"I cannot do so," faltered Hagar. "I should commit a false, a perfidious act, and trifle with the most sacred thing on earth, if I appeared before God and

* At the period this work was written (1858) citizenship was not accorded to those of any other religious faith than the Lutheran; and in 1862 Madame Schwartz wrote "Birth and Education" as a protest against this injustice. Later, Sweden yielded to the power of truth, and granted religious freedom to all.

through baptism renounced a faith which has become a part of myself."

"Farewell! you have made me wretched!" exclaimed Albert, and rushed out. Hagar sank down on the sofa and burst into a flood of tears.

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An hour afterwards the door-bell rang again. The sound of it roused Hagar from the grief in which she was plunged. She dried her tears quickly, as she thought, —

"It is probably aunt; poor old lady, she will be anxious if she perceives that I have been weeping. Affection is very often a tyrant which commands us not to trouble those who love us with our sorrows."

Hagar went and seated herself at her work. She had scarcely taken her place before an old servant showed herself at the door, saying, —

"A lady wishes to see you, mademoiselle."

"Ask her to walk in," answered Hagar, and rose to meet the new-comer; but she stopped half-way, for just then Professorskan von Krug was seen with her cold, hard, and haughty face. Hagar had been checked by the expression of the Professorskan's features, and not by any other feeling, for she did not know Albert's mother. At the opera Albert had considered it entirely unnecessary to point her out to Hagar, — why, we cannot tell.

Stiff and straight the Professorskan advanced, and when she found herself opposite Hagar, she asked, —

"Are you Mademoiselle Israelli?"

"Yes, madam."

"You probably know who I am?"

"No; I have not the honor."

"The name is of no consequence," said her Grace, seating herself in an easy-chair. "I have a commission to you from one of my relatives; you thus see that my name has nothing to do with the matter."

"As you please, madam. I await what you have to say to me." Hagar took another easy-chair.

"Justice von Krug has informed his mother that he intended to offer you his hand, and it is she who has commissioned me to speak to you in regard to it. She desires me to tell you that he has acted in direct opposition to her will, that she never intends to acknowledge a Jewess as her daughter-in-law, and that she will not allow him to cross her threshold from the moment he unites his fate with yours, for through such a marriage he would insult his mother. She has requested me to tell you all this in order that you may consider before you consent to marry her son. In case any selfish calculation should influence your course of action, the Justice's mother bids me say that she is disposed to make whatever pecuniary sacrifice you may demand as a reparation for the match with young Von Krug; but that, if her son forgets himself so far as to marry you, she intends to disinherit him. She bids me —"

"Allow me to interrupt you, Fru Professorskan," said Hagar, "for from the heat, as well as from the merciless manner in which you speak, I have guessed that you are the proud mother who thinks with dread of the possibility of having a *Jewess* for her daughter-in-law. Madam, your promises and your threats are unnecessary here, for I never shall become your son's wife. This is not because I do not love him; on the contrary, I would consider it a great happiness to devote my life to him; but an obstacle exists stronger and mightier than your pride, and this is a different *religious belief*."

"Ah, you would certainly not be the first of your race to abjure your faith for worldly gain," rejoined her Grace, haughtily, "and the match with my son, *if*

he offered you the choice, would, I fear, outweigh your scruples."

"You are mistaken, madam," replied Hagar with dignity; "I have actually had to choose between *my faith* and *your son*, but I remained faithful to the former."

"You have refused an offer of marriage from *my son!* Ah, that is incredible!" exclaimed her Grace, crimson with indignation at the thought that a woman belonging to a despised race, with no property save her work, had dared to reject her son, and this too without any prompting from her. She had dared to place something higher than to become the wife of a young man in Albert's position. That was perfectly scandalous. It would have been very different if she had refused from fear of his mother.

"You are astonished to find that one of the Jewish race can value anything more highly than temporal advantage; but you are wrong. We — a people without fatherland, without home, who have been oppressed and persecuted for centuries — have nevertheless been faithful to the God of our forefathers. Without murmuring we have borne the tyranny of the Christians, and worked silently and unobserved for the only independence which remained to us, namely, the pecuniary; but even this the poor downtrodden people were obliged to conceal, as if it had not been a fruit of their efforts, but a stolen welfare. Ah, madam, you do wrong in accusing them of being self-interested! What resource have the Christians left us for our maintenance? Only that of trade. If then, in the course of time, the desire of possession is more strongly developed in us than in other people, is it not rather the fault of those who have forced us to this one-sided development, than of these poor creatures, who have been compelled to think only of earning? You will urge the objection that the Jews are dishonest. Ah! it is too often true; but how much resentment is there not in the breast of the oppressed against the oppressor, and this, madam, is the cause of all the faults which cling to the children of Israel. Had they possessed a fatherland, a soil of their own, and been allowed to cultivate it like other people, they would not have been worse than others, but, on the contrary, would have stood ahead of them in many respects. But forgive me, madam; the love for my unhappy race has carried me away, and I have spoken on a subject which cannot possibly interest you. All that you wished to prevent was having me for a daughter-in-law. My own devotion to my faith has in this respect forestalled you. I shall never abjure my faith, and I cannot become the wife of a Christian."

The Professorskan rose, saying, —

"All connection between you and my son is thus broken."

"Madam, there has never been any connection between him and me except a purely friendly one, and this can never be broken by me."

"If I know *my son* rightly, the humiliation of having been rejected by you will be an insult which he can never forgive. I can thus feel quite sure that the intercourse with you, which has made him the object of dubious and mortifying conjectures, is now at an end."

"It is wrong of you to try to wound one who is unhappy and whose whole life is pure and unblemished."

"Mademoiselle, we have different views, and I consider it unnecessary to prolong this conversation," replied her Grace loftily, and walked majestically from the room.

"Everywhere and by all humiliated!" exclaimed Hagar, and threw herself down on the sofa, with both hands pressed to her heart.

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Sunk in a bitter grief, the depth of which none but poor Hagar herself could

measure, she sat motionless, without thought of what was passing around her. She was so overpowered by her agonized feelings that she did not notice that her aunt had entered the room directly after the Professorskan.

Mademoiselle Sara Israelli was a small woman, with strongly marked Jewish features. The same stamp of intelligence and ardor which distinguished her niece appeared in her expression, although not in so high a degree.

She regarded her niece in silence, while resentment and love, hate and grief, were reflected alternately in her face. She stood still, as if afraid of rousing Hagar from her thoughts. Finally Hagar heaved a deep sigh, and raised her bowed head. At this motion her eyes fell on her aunt.

"Hagar, you are suffering," said Sara, "and this through the words uttered by that Christian woman."

"Yes! I suffer. Could one believe that these Christians really profess doctrines of love and reconciliation? No! They are more cruel and relentless than the wild heathen, who immolate their enemies to their gods. The savage contents himself with torturing the body; the Christian lacerates and tortures the soul. From the physical torment follows death; from soul-suffering, animosity and despair."

"No, Hagar, not for you, the daughter of an unhappy race, nurtured in humiliation and the consciousness of all the injustice that has been done to the children of Israel; you ought not to despair, but to hate."

There was an expression of ecstatic goodness in Hagar's glance, as she replied, —

"My heart can suffer and forgive, but not hate." She again pressed her hands to her breast, turned pale, and leaned back against the sofa.

"Hagar, how is it?" exclaimed Sara, hastening forward. "You see, child, your emotion has again brought on an attack. O, how I hate these Christians, who have robbed me of everything, and are going to deprive me of you too!" muttered she, and rang for a servant.

"Go for the doctor," ordered Sara, and clasped the unconscious Hagar to her bosom.

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On the afternoon of the same day Albert sat alone in his sitting-room, with his head leaning on his hand, an image of sombre grief, but a grief which imbitters the soul instead of making it humble. He was roused from his reflections by a servant, who announced, —

"Mademoiselle Israelli!"

At the sound of this name, which to him contained everything sweet and everything agonizing, he started up with an expression of, "I know not what —"; but when the servant stepped aside, and let in the one announced, the ray of joy which had lighted his features disappeared, and he hastened towards Sara with the words, —

"Has anything happened to Hagar?"

"She has had an attack of her severe disorder," answered Sara, fixing her eyes sharply on the Justice. "I come to demand an account from you, for you are the cause of all this evil."

"I! Is then the consciousness of being loved by me such a burden to Hagar? She has rejected me and I have gone."

"Possibly. I do not know. But your mother, — what right has she to enter under Hagar's roof and insult her? Is the poor Jewess's home no refuge, or is she also to be pursued there by a base scorn? What harm has Hagar done your mother? None, — and yet she behaves with the most offensive arrogance towards a lone girl who has neither wealth, rank, friends, nor relatives to protect her."

"Has my mother been to Hagar?" asked Albert, becoming still paler.

"Yes!"

Sara related the whole conversation between Hagar and the Professorskan. When she finished, Albert only said, —

"Within an hour I will be with Hagar. No objections, if you really love her. Words have been exchanged between her and me which I must explain."

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The Professorskan and Albertine were sitting in the cabinet, taking their coffee in silence, when Albert entered. There was a cloud on the young man's brow, dark and threatening.

"I would like to say a few words to you, mother," said he, turning to the Professorskan.

"When the coffee is carried out, I shall be at liberty," was the answer.

In a little while the mother and son found themselves alone.

"You have been up to Mademoiselle Israelli's, mother?" began Albert.

"Yes!"

"With what intention? Probably to see her and try to understand her character, as you have heard from all that she enjoys general respect for her pure and elevated morals."

"*My son* must remember that he neither can nor ought to call his mother to account for her actions. This is not expected of one's children, you understand."

"No, I do not understand the language you employ," exclaimed Albert, passionately, "and I must now speak the words of truth, even if we should separate. Had you been a *mother* in the true significance of the word, you would have called on Hagar, spoken to her with mildness, and as a woman should; and if you found her to possess the qualities which she really does possess, then you would have realized that she is created to secure your son's happiness. Ah, mother, what a beautiful rôle could you not have played! You ought to have been the one who with your loving words tried to enlighten and instruct her in the doctrines of Christianity, and then, when you had succeeded in turning her heart and mind to the divine charity that is revealed in them, you would have been the right one to lead her to the baptismal font and afterwards to place her hand in mine. Mother! your son would then have knelt before you, as before his life's good angel, his earthly providence, and you — you would have enjoyed the felicity of conducing to his happiness by giving him a mate so noble, high-minded, and gentle as Hagar. Mother, mother, how could you refrain from acting this beautiful part!" Albert ceased, and his features bore an expression of pain.

"If you have come here to insult me, I must tell you that if you do not leave the room immediately, I will do so."

"I shall go, — go with the bitter remembrance that my mother is not — a woman." Albert rose. The sad look was gone, and his face had an expression of indomitable sternness. "You have acted in direct opposition to what you ought to have done," resumed he in a clear voice, "and this I shall never forget. You have insulted a woman before whom you and I ought to kneel. You have tried to force yourself between her and me; — well, then, this act of yours steps between us. You have never been my mother, I am no longer your son; you have so often spoken of rejecting me, now it is I who reject you. Farewell." Albert went.

When the door closed behind him, the proud woman bent her head and wept; wept over her son's ingratitude, not over her mistaken course. Blind to her own faults, the Professorskan always regarded the effects of them as proceeding from others.

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That same evening the Professorskan had a little gathering of friends and ac-

quaintances. They had just taken tea, and some of the company asked Albertine to sing, which request the young girl in her cold, stiff way hastened to fulfil. As she was selecting her music and arranging the lights on the piano, she heard Öfverstinnan Stålkrans say, —

"I suppose you have heard of the accident that has befallen Doctor Bergström?"

At this name Albertine stood motionless as a statue, in order that not a single word should escape her.

"No, I have not," answered one of the ladies.

"What has happened to the amiable Doctor?" inquired another.

"He has been run over, and so badly injured that it is very doubtful whether he is living at the present time."

The narrator was here interrupted by the sound of a heavy fall, and a terrible commotion arose among all the ladies who had repaired to the saloon to listen to the music.

The Professorskan rose and went out to see what was the matter. The first thing that met her eyes was her daughter, stretched lifeless on the floor.

However insensible the Professorskan was, she could not remain unmoved at this sight. She had never seen her children in danger of their lives, never thought of the possibility of losing them by death. They had strong constitutions, and had always enjoyed good health. The hard, unfeeling mother could not keep from shuddering when she saw her daughter lying there, cold and white, as if she were dead. She was almost as pale as Albertine when she bent down to feel of her brow, and thought, —

"My son has rejected me! My daughter is dying!"

With a short, quick voice she gave the order that the Fröken should be taken up to her room, and then sent for the family physician, Doctor A——. She made several hasty excuses, and went herself with Albertine when she was carried up. They employed all the usual means to restore her to life, but without success. Finally the Doctor came. He immediately opened a vein, and as soon as this was done, a deep sigh heaved Albertine's breast. The next moment she opened her eyes, and looked around her with a perfectly lucid expression.

"It was a severe congestion of the heart," said the Doctor, "but it is now over."

"My daughter is then out of danger?" asked her Grace.

"Completely! A little quiet and rest is all that the Fröken needs."

A few moments afterwards the Doctor and her Grace left Albertine; the latter said as she went out, —

"Keep quiet, as the Doctor said."

When Albertine found herself alone with the girl who had been engaged to fill Minna's place, she rose hastily, with the words, —

"Lotta, can you keep a secret?"

"What a question! If you wish to put me to the test, Fröken, I think that you will be satisfied," replied Lotta, with a volubility which was not calculated to inspire any particular confidence in her power of concealment.

"You are a niece of Martha's, are you not?"

"Yes, I am."

"And charged to tell her all about my movements, which you also do?"

"As you say, Fröken," stammered Lotta, coloring.

"You need not make any excuses, but only answer me honestly. Will you or will you not serve me by keeping things to yourself? Your silence shall be duly rewarded. Well?"

"I promise to serve you faithfully and be silent as the grave."

"Good! Go down and tell Martha that I am asleep, and that no one ought to come up and disturb me."

Lotta went, but came back directly and told Albertine that she had met the Professorskan herself, who ordered her not to leave the Fröken, and to inform her when Albertine awoke.

"Now listen attentively to what I tell you. I must go out. No objections. You shall accompany me. I will put a shawl over my head, so that people will take me for a servant-girl."

"But you are sick, and so pale that I do not dare."

"Hush! if you are not willing to accompany me, I shall go alone," exclaimed Albertine, decidedly. "Get my things quickly."

In a few moments they both stole down stairs with noiseless steps, and reached the street without any obstacles. Albertine trembled so violently that Lotta was obliged to support her; but in the next instant her will conquered the nervous tremor. She seized Lotta's arm and hurried on until she stopped at the Doctor's door. Then she was not able to hold herself up, but sank down on the steps.

"Lotta, go up and ask Doctor Bergström's servant to come down," whispered Albertine, in a tremulous voice.

Lotta obeyed. She read in her young mistress's face the expression of a grief which bordered on despair.

Several minutes elapsed, which appeared to Albertine like ages. Finally Lotta came, followed by the Doctor's servant. Albertine had risen and stood leaning against the wall. She made a violent effort to subdue her emotion, and get these words over her pale lips, —

"How is the Doctor?"

"Well, but he is not at home. He has gone to Doctor Ström who was run over to-day and broke his leg."

"Then it is not your master who was run over," exclaimed Albertine.

"No, God be praised! but there is the Doctor himself," added the servant. Richard stood behind Albertine.

Joy had followed so rapidly upon grief, that it came very near depriving Albertine of consciousness. She reeled, but the Doctor sprang forward and caught her in his arms. By the light of the lamp he recognized Albertine's features, and almost uttered a cry of fright at the discovery.

The next moment Albertine found herself up in the Doctor's saloon. Lotta waited in the entry. Richard had placed Albertine on the sofa, and now stood before her. The young girl's sobs were the only sounds that broke the silence. Tears — woman's deliverance in all strong emotions — now came to give free vent to all the grief and joy which had so quickly succeeded each other.

Richard fastened upon her a deep, serious, and sorrowful look; his face was pale, his brow clouded. After a moment's interval Albertine looked up and gave him both hands, with the words, —

"Richard, forgive me! but they told me that you were dying, and I came to die with you."

Richard took the outstretched hands. He pressed them impetuously, almost passionately to his lips, but dropped them again, and said sadly, although with a tender voice, —

"You have forgotten *everything*, — even your promise to me not to expose your reputation."

"Yes, everything!" exclaimed Albertine, again bursting into tears, "for you are *all* to me. What signified reputation and honor when you were gone? nothing remained to me but to die. O Richard! to what an agonizing fate has not your magnanimity doomed me! You allow me to suffer, struggle, and pine away, only because your pride does not permit you to take the woman for a wife who has only her father's consent to the union with you. You allow a hard mother's selfishness and pride to separate us. Say, do you love me when you can with

cold blood witness my anguish, my tears, and my grief?"

"Albertine, hear me! The moments are precious, it will not do for you to be here, but I must make it clear to you what separates us. No person can build his happiness upon so poor a basis as that of trampling his mother's blessing underfoot with contempt. No! a parent's blessing is the greatest wealth for a married pair, and the man who loves you as deeply as I must not rob you of this beautiful inheritance."

Albertine made no reply.

"And now, Albertine, you must return home."

"Without a word of love, after I have suffered so much, after I have regained you."

"Ah, Albertine, are my words needed when my whole behavior ought to tell you how deeply I love you! This is not the place to speak of love; every word about it under my roof I should consider an injury to you. Your anxiety, your despair, has driven you here, to ascertain whether I lived; but I must not therefore forget that this can never be called a meeting for the exchange of tender feelings. Albertine, I suffer from the step you have taken; it makes me desperate, because these domestics who know of it may form ideas from it offensive to your maidenly pride."

"Ah! what do I care for these persons, what they think of me, when it concerns you?"

"Poor child! What a pity that you have not a kind and affectionate mother!" The Doctor raised her hand to his lips, adding: "*Your honor is mine*, and when you expose it, the shadow falls back on your Richard."

"Richard, one word of consolation, of forgiveness."

"Albertine, I ought to thank you on my knees for your love. That I do not *comes from* the fact that — I do not yet possess the right. But if my peace is dear to you, then never enter this house until you can do so as my wife. In moments of despair, of hopelessness, fly to your father. He is your friend, your comforter, until the day when I am allowed to become all this. Accept the conviction that a man must love a woman very deeply when, like me, he considers her sacred." The Doctor's lips touched Albertine's brow. A few moments later Albertine and Lotta were driven home in a carriage.

They returned as unobserved as when they left. Albertine retired, a prey to many conflicting emotions, and with a high fever. She closed her eyes and lay as if sunk in a deep slumber, in order to be better able to analyze her feelings. In the course of a few hours she heard the door open and her mother ask in a low voice, —

"How is it?"

"The Fröken is asleep," answered Lotta.

The Professorskan approached the bed and stopped at it. She regarded her daughter's deadly pale face, and leaned down to listen to the short, quick breath. If Albertine had opened her eyes and looked at her mother, she would have been surprised at the expression of grief and anxiety in her features. At this unguarded moment, when neither self-love nor authority came in play, the Professorskan had a return of the same feeling which she had experienced when Albertine was yet a little tender child. It was something of the maternal feeling — which is never completely extinguished even in the coldest heart — which stirred within this marble breast. She bent down, touched Albertine's brow scarcely perceptibly, and went away.

Albertine's heart beat violently at this light pressure of her mother's lips, and she had a desire to put her arm around her neck and receive one more caress, even if ever so slight; but this desire

was forced aside by a bitter recollection of all that she had suffered, and she remained motionless.

The clock had just struck seven the next morning when Hans knocked quite cautiously at Albertine's door. Lotta opened it.

"Is the Fröken awake?" asked he.

"Yes, but she is not yet up," was the answer.

"Tell her that the Professor wishes to see her immediately. He does not feel very well. Ask her to come in right away, for I am going for Doctor Bergström and the Justice." Hans, the man of few words, had spoken with great haste and evident anxiety.

When the door closed behind him, Albertine rose from the bed, although her head ached and the room swam before her eyes. It was not many moments before she entered her father's room. He was abed, and one could see from his unusual high color that he had a fever.

"It is good that you came — h'm, h'm. Hans says that I am not quite — h'm, h'm — well," said the Professor.

"Beloved papa," faltered Albertine, taking his thin and feverish hand, "you are very ill, I fear. You remember, papa, I said yesterday morning that you were not well."

"Just so, I remember it, but was not willing to believe it. H'm, h'm, — sit down, child. It seems that I am no longer young, — have forgotten to think that I was growing old, — never occupied myself with it. Cannot remember that I have thought upon it before to-day. There, there, do not weep, — do not like tears. Nature takes its due, — when the life thread is spun out, all is ended; one cannot piece it."

Albertine smoothed his pillow, inquired about his pains, and tried to preserve a calm which she was far from feeling.

Never do persons seem dearer to us than when we see them on a sick-bed and fear to lose them. Then all faults are forgotten, all wrongs are forgiven, and only their good qualities stand forth in our memory. So was it with Albertine. This father, who during his whole life had been unmindful of her existence, and with whom she had associated only for a few short months and had now learned to love, appeared to her as the tenderest of fathers, — the loss of him as one of the keenest and bitterest of sufferings. While tortured by these feelings, she sent word to her mother that her father was sick, and that he desired some refreshing drink.

Her Grace did not have time to present herself before Doctor Bergstrom, with a hurried step, entered the sick man's room. When the Professor saw the Doctor, he offered him his hand with the words, —

"Thank you for coming so soon, Herr Doctor. I fear that I shall not be able to finish my great work on logic."

The Doctor felt the patient's pulse, and Albertine stood pale and trembling at the foot of the bed. Richard raised his eyes to her; there was such a warm and sympathizing expression in his glance, and his voice was so warm when he said, —

"We will hope for a good issue; but I would like to speak a few words in private with my patient."

Albertine went into the other room. Just as the door between the two rooms closed behind her the Professorskan entered.

"Is your father ill?" asked she in her usual cold and measured way.

"Yes; seriously, as it seems," replied Albertine, with emotion. "The Doctor is in there," added she, with an unsteady voice, "but he wished to talk to papa alone."

"Ah, indeed!" Her Grace seated herself on the sofa. A quarter of an hour

elapsed. The Professorskan's steel-gray eyes rested on her daughter, who sat leaning back in an easy-chair with an expression of despondency.

Finally the door opened and Richard came in. At the sight of him the Professorskan started as if stung by a serpent. So he was not dying.

All the compassion she had felt for her daughter the evening before disappeared when she saw this man that she so hated. She forgot her husband's illness, everything, in the resentment she felt at the thought that they had dared to send for him and that he had dared to present himself in her house.

The Doctor, with his swift comprehension, read all these feelings in the proud woman's face. Richard's features were so sad and serious, however, that the Professorskan ought to have concluded from it that it was not the moment to give way to anger. Richard bowed to her and said, turning to Albertine, —

"Will the Froken be so good as to go in?"

Albertine instantly complied with the request.

Her Grace also rose from her seat, to go in to her husband's room and ask how it came that the Doctor entered her house, but Richard closed the door after Albertine, saying, —

"I am here at a written call from the Professor." He took out a letter and laid it on the table before her Grace. "It is *only* the physician, madam, that you see before you. I promise on my faith and honor to endeavor to forget completely that this house contains any person dear to me, except the patient I have been commissioned to attend. Whatever your feelings may be for me, try to control them during the days I am obliged to visit your house as a physician. Any outbreak of ill-temper which might excite the Professor would only hasten his decease, which I do not consider *any* medical skill able to prevent. Within a very short time, madam, you will be a widow."

The Doctor opened the door of the Professor's room, and the Professorskan went in considerably milder than usual.

The Doctor prescribed some medicine, sent Hans to the apothecary for it, and returned to the sick-room. At this moment Albert arrived.

Forty-eight hours had not elapsed since the Professorskan saw her son, but this short time had been sufficient to produce a great change in these handsome, energetic features. They seemed to have grown rigid under the inward struggle he had undergone. Albert greeted his mother with a mute bow only, nodded to Albertine, pressed the Doctor's hand, and then went to his father's bedside. The Professor extended his hand to him, saying, —

"I have much to say to you before I enter upon the long journey. Therefore I have sent for you. My dear," added the Professor, turning to his wife, "I should like to speak with my son."

What the Professor and the Justice said we need not repeat. Their conversation occupied the whole forenoon, and when the Doctor returned in the afternoon he found the father and the son still together; but as the Professor's condition was worse, he forbade all further conversation, which only exhausted the sick man's strength. Richard asked her Grace to send for their family physician, as he wished to consult with him.

Now followed a fortnight of hard suffering for the poor patient; of mute but nameless anxiety for Albertine, who, pale and silent, watched day and night by his pillow. The few moments in which she enjoyed any rest was when her father slumbered. Then she leaned her head against his pillow, and wept herself to sleep. Sometimes Richard begged: "For my sake, take a little rest!"

"Separated from him I should not be

able to get any; let me therefore stay where I am," was the answer.

Mute and cold the Professorskan sat the whole day in her husband's sick-room, gave him his medicine in silence at the stroke of the clock, and fulfilled all prescriptions with stiff punctuality. What passed in her mind when, leaning back in an easy-chair and concealed by the bed-curtains, she heard "this fool," (as she considered her husband,) during the moments of respite from pain, speak words full of love and tenderness to his daughter; saw him caress Albertine's pale brow, accusing himself of having neglected her, and thanking her for the love and self-abnegation she had shown him on his death-bed, — we do not know. Never did his wife's name pass the dying man's lips, never did he inquire after her, never did he ask her for anything. When she approached and gave him his medicine, he merely said, "Thank you, my dear," and closed his eyes.

On the fourteenth day the physician declared that the Professor had but a few hours to live. At noon Albert came, attended by some lawyers. The Professorskan and Albertine left the room at the sick man's request.

A few hours afterwards they were again called in. The Professor gave his hand to his wife, saying, —

"Farewell, Sophie, we are now to part. Better for us both if you had been more loving and tender; but what I was obliged to regret all my life, death has given me in my daughter. It is also my last and express wish that she and my friend and physician Doctor Bergström shall belong to each other. See to it that you respect your husband's last words better than you respected them while he lived." Then he blessed his children, and, joining Albertine's and the Doctor's hands, spoke warm and loving words to them.

That evening the death struggle began and lasted a whole day and night; then all was over, — but not the afflictions in the Professorskan's house. When her father breathed his last, Albertine's strength was exhausted, and she was borne lifeless from his room. Her Grace, with dry eyes and sealed lips, went from her husband's death-bed, to take her place by her daughter's couch. Richard said to her, as Albertine was carried out, —

"Madam, the deceased gave me the right to call your daughter my bride. I shall never avail myself of it against your will; but to none will I resign the right of saving her life."

"Sir, you are a physician, fulfil your duty!" was all that her Grace answered.

The father was buried while life and death fought hard for the daughter. The Professorskan sat by Albertine's bedside and listened to the tolling of the bells which gave indication that her husband was lowered into his grave, — this man to whom she had been united thirty years. It was still all around her, except the mournful sound of Albertine's delirious words, and the knell which sent her a last greeting from the tomb. Unavoidably these thirty years passed in review before her memory. How harsh and unloving she had been towards him, who on his death-bed had mild and friendly words for all, even for the old servant, but only cold ones for her! His words, "See to it that you respect the will of the dying more than you did that of the living," re-echoed continually; and memory, this lash of the erring, also repeated her brother's words when they separated at Rönby: "It would be strange if God did not humble your pride." "What if God should take both husband and daughter," said she to herself, and the usually so insensible heart contracted at the thought of being left alone; for she had no love to expect from her son, who during all this sorrowful time had not a word for her, but maintained a frigid silence. Aban-

doned by him, deprived of her husband and daughter, the proud woman felt, as she sat there, that there was something more to strive for in life than to gratify pride. Tears, — these guests of grief which seldom visited the Professorskan — ran slowly down the cold hard face. They were the first she had shed since her husband's death. Gradually the tolling ceased. This indicated that the minister was now pronouncing the blessing over the old man, who, absorbed in his learning, had very often forgotten the Supreme Being; and she, the surviving widow, who in her self-idolatry and pride never thought of God, now bowed her head, and the pale unaccustomed lips faltered an incoherent prayer. She remained with her head leaning against Albertine's pillow, and again listened to the bells which after the interment gave forth their plaintive sound. The Professorskan's pride had been repressed by the woe and bitterness of the moment; but when she heard the sound of steps in the corridor, she passed her hand over her brow and effaced every trace of emotion. When the door opened, she sat there stiff and cold as ever. It was the Doctor, who came from the grave. They exchanged a mute greeting, and he bent over the sick girl. His face betrayed keen anguish, a bitter and penetrating grief. He clasped the little feverish hand a moment in his, and a tear glistened in the strong man's eye.

"I must open a vein again," said the Doctor.

The Professorskan went to a bell-cord and rang.

"A bowl for the Doctor," said she to Lotta, who the next moment was back with the required article.

The Doctor pushed back her sleeve and disclosed an alabaster arm, from which a clear crimson stream soon gushed forth.

It would lead us too far to follow the course of her illness day by day. We will therefore put a period of four weeks between the above-described day and the event which succeeded.

Albertine's youth and the Doctor's skill had conquered the illness, and the young girl now lay on her sofa, a pale convalescent. The cold and proud expression had melted away, and in its stead a mild, quiet sadness rested upon the beautiful features.

The Professorskan had resumed her usual domineering manner. All traces of the momentary humiliation which arose within her when her daughter was taken sick had disappeared.

She now carried her head as high as ever. It is true she still sat with her daughter, but no glimpse of tenderness shone from the steel-gray eyes, and she seemed to take care of her recovering child rather from reason than from inclination. Occasionally they exchanged a few words.

It was the 2d of May. The Professorskan sat by the window in her daughter's room, with her knitting-work. Albertine with a sad gaze regarded her immovable face, which appeared still more cold and rigid from the effect of her deep mourning.

Martha opened the door, saying, —

"There is a gentleman down stairs who wishes to see your Grace."

"I will come," was the answer, and the Professorskan rose, adding to Albertine, "While I am gone, Lotta can stay with you," and with this she left the room.

On reaching the saloon, she found the Doctor standing before a picture which hung over the piano. When her Grace closed the door, the Doctor turned round; the Professorskan made a haughty bend of the head, with the words, —

"Your visits, sir, are those of a physician, and I am not ill."

"They have been those of a physician, and I hope your Grace has not had reason to complain, for a single instant, that I have forgotten my promise."

"You have kept your word."

"I thank you for this testimony. Why I have to-day requested a private interview is because physicians are now unnecessary."

"And you intend to appeal to my husband's last words, which expressed a decided wish that Albertine should become your wife. I cherish respect for the dead, sir, and you have the right to avail yourself of the promise her father gave." The Professorskan carried her head higher than ever.

"And yet, madam, although, according to your own confession, I possess this right, notwithstanding I love Albertine more deeply than ever after the danger she has gone through, and although I have learned from the expression of her eyes, and from all the words that escaped her during her delirium, how much she is attached to me, I do not think of availing myself of this privilege until you lay your daughter's hand in mine and bless our union."

"Then, sir, you will never avail yourself of it; for my blessing you will never have."

"If I had requested it when, in spite of all your self-command, you watched with fear and trembling at your daughter's sick-bed, while her life was in danger, would you then have refused? If I had said, I will restore your daughter to life, but I demand your blessing as my reward, what would you have answered? Ah! I have read your anguish in your eyes, and I know that you would then have given me what I desired."

"You would then have gained my consent by force."

"True, and this I did not wish. No; voluntarily, with the full conviction that you thereby make your daughter happy, do I wish to obtain it."

"You!"

"O madam, would you rather see your daughter pine away and fade like a flower which is deprived of sunlight, than to sacrifice your pride for her happiness? Formerly, madam, I have stood before you as the proud man who relied upon his own power; now I am the humble suppliant, who entreats you, not for my own happiness, but for that of one whom you ought not to have the heart to throw again into despair, after such a hard struggle. Be magnanimous, make this sacrifice for your child, and you shall never have reason to repent it. Albertine's happiness and my gratitude, could they not be a slight reward for this sacrifice of yours?"

"Sir, let us break off. What you desire, I cannot give you; but you are free to take the bride a dying man has given you; and when this occurs she will be dead to me. I have a strong soul, and I shall endeavor to bear my loss. Consequently you need not pay any regard to me."

"Ah, madam, you go too far. God grant that you may not one day be compelled to repent your hardness towards your children, and your obstinacy towards your husband, who exerted all his power to show you the integrity of his principles. Your words have decided my course of action. I will take a journey abroad, and on Thursday I shall confide my patient, Fröken von Krug to Doctor A——'s care. Will you allow me to bid her farewell?"

"You are at liberty to do so, sir."

"Will your Grace accompany me?"

"You can bid my daughter farewell without my presence. I must thank you for all the trouble you have had with her and my husband."

Her Grace bent her head proudly. The Doctor bowed in silence and left the room.

Her Grace remained standing. She uttered, —

"That man actually forces me to render him my respect; but never shall he succeed in obtaining my consent. Rather may my heart burst."

Her Grace left the saloon and went up stairs; but instead of going into her own room or Albertine's, she entered the one Albert used to occupy, and which adjoined her daughter's apartment, being only separated by a door. The Professorskan approached this door, put her ear to it, and listened to what was said within.

We pass over the first exchange of feelings between the two lovers, after the Doctor had sent Lotta away. These conversations about love — for now Richard spoke of his love, as he considered that he had the right to do so — are all very much alike; lovers utter words to each other which have no interest for a third person, but constitute all for those who exchange them. Therefore we can, without detriment to the whole, omit the beginning of the conversation and give only the end.

"This visit of mine," said Richard, "is a farewell one, my beloved Albertine, for on Thursday I must start on a journey abroad."

However much Richard exerted himself to utter these words calmly, his voice nevertheless trembled.

Albertine rose half up, and exclaimed with deadly pale lips, —

"You are going! You abandon me! Now, now, when nothing in the world separates us! Now when my father's blessing unites our fates indissolubly!"

"Albertine, I go, but shall return in a few months. It is my duty as a physician to take this journey, and you would not have me neglect it."

The Doctor was pale.

"You shall not go without me; there is no duty which enjoins that upon you. Ah, Richard, you deceive me! it is not as you say. No, I guess how it is; you have been talking to my mother, and she — she who has no heart — she has not even respect for my dying father's words. O God! Richard, shall nothing *in the world* teach you how impossible it is to conquer her? Her will is *all* to her; for it must everything be sacrificed. O my beloved father! why did you die, and leave me among these heartless people?" Albertine buried her face in her hands.

"You are severe towards your mother, unjust to me. Ah, if you could calculate all the pangs to which I have doomed myself, you would not say that I am without heart; but could I well have acted otherwise? Still my own high-minded Albertine cannot so judge the man who has sacrificed all his selfish feelings from respect for the girl he loves with all his soul. Had you, like me, seen your mother's concealed grief while you lay ill, and your life hung in the balance, you would not deny that she had a heart."

"You defend her," faltered Albertine.

"Yes; she is *your mother*, Albertine, and in this capacity she has the right to my lenience, my respect. I feel that I shall one day be able to force this proud heart to yield its consent to our union. Courage! 'We are both young,' said you once, 'and what matters it if we wait a few years?'"

"Richard," stammered Albertine, "I have not the courage to live without you. It seems to me that my mother's anger, the world's contempt, would be easier to bear than the loss of you."

"You think so now, but you would not think so then. Continually would the image of your offended mother steal between you and your felicity, and pour gall into its chalice. The result would be that the happiness you expected to enjoy would constantly elude you, and the gnawing consciousness of your mother's anger would alone remain. 'The world's contempt'! Ah, my beloved, you know not of what a terrible spectre you speak! Contempt is an inexorable demon, and the woman who is persecuted by it will in vain try to raise herself in her own consciousness. The unrelenting

fury will pursue her and drive peace and joy from her heart. No, I value your love too highly, you are too sacred to me, for me to desire from egotism to dedicate your life to either of these two misfortunes."

The Doctor seized her hands, raised them to his lips, and then spoke such warm and comforting words that he succeeded, if not in convincing, still in inspiring trust, hope, and patience in Albertine's soul.

Leaning against the door-post in the adjoining room, the Professorskan had listened to every word. Strange feelings moved within the unbending woman's breast when she heard Richard depart, and her daughter's violent sobs reached her ears. She raised her head with the usual proud and decided motion with which she tried to free herself from all weakness, as she called the heart's voice.

"God be praised that that man is at last gone! He is right, he would be able to force me to respect him in the end. These upstarts really lay themselves out to play the magnanimous in order to subdue our prejudices, but they are of plebeian blood in spite of it all."

The Professorskan left the room and met Martha in the hall.

"Gardener Bergström wishes to see your Grace."

The Professorskan colored while she thought, —

"No, never shall I call the son of my gardener my son-in-law. There is humiliation even in the thought of it."

In the saloon stood the senior Bergström. When her Grace entered, he bowed slightly and handed her a folded paper, saying, —

"I must now return your Grace the contract. It was drawn up and signed by the late Professor. He is now dead; consequently it is broken, and I will leave as soon as your Grace procures a new gardener."

"Very well," said her Grace, taking the contract. "It is by no means my intention that you shall suffer through your removal from here; but I am disposed to allow you to retain your salary until next May, when the contract is ended."

"It is not necessary, your Grace," replied Bergström, smiling. "I am not poor, but have collected quite a nice little property, which is fully equal to the one you inherit from the Professor."

"If so, why do you serve?"

"Yes, why? Because it has become a habit with me to work for others. While young, I toiled and saved in order to help my half-sister's husband to educate a boy, with whom you, after he grew up, became acquainted. I mean Mauritz Ekeberg. As a *man*, I worked for my own children, and believe that I have not worked ill. I hope your Grace will acknowledge that I am not a poor workman, although I am now old." With these words he bowed.

Her Grace had a long struggle with her emotion at the name of Ekeberg. When the old man turned to the door, she said with great effort, —

"Then you were related to Ekeberg?"

"His mother was the daughter of my mother by her first marriage, and a number of years older than I. When my father died, I inherited in his place, and as my sister had no more than what her husband earned, I gave her son half of my means, and helped her to defray his expenses until I had children myself. He was then a youth, and I said to him, 'Spare your little capital until you have a family, and work for your living.' He did not get along, for he threw away life and health in his love for your sister." The old man bowed again and left the room.

Her Grace sat down on a chair as if stunned by the consciousness of being obliged to count relationship with that employée in spite of all her contempt and aversion. He could go and say everywhere, "My nephew is a brother-in-law of Fru von Krug."

Bergström returned to his dwelling, where he dressed himself in his Sunday clothes, and went out, directing his steps to Queen Street. He stopped before a hotel for transient people, looked at the number of the house, and walked in. On reaching the second floor he inquired of a servant standing in the hall, —

"Is it here that some one has advertised for a gardener?"

"Yes," answered the servant, opening a door. "Walk in; the Baron is at home."

Bergström stepped into a saloon. Leaning back in an easy-chair sat Baron Silfverkrona, reading a newspaper. When the old man entered, he raised his eyes, and fastened them upon the caller, but sprang up as if he had seen a superior. The Baron had become deadly pale, and stood erect before the tall old man, who at seeing him also remained still. Both stared before them, as if they read some terrible history in each other's faces. The Baron's features betrayed anguish and remorse; Bergström's, on the contrary, a bitter, immeasurable grief, and finally, when the memories which besieged the old man became unbearable, he bowed his gray head, covered his face with his hands, and burst into sobs. It was touching to see this powerful man, whose every feature revealed strength of soul and body, abandon himself to the outbreak of his grief. This sight also seemed to be so extremely painful to the young man that he could not endure it. He fell on his knees before Bergström, and exclaimed with anguish, —

"Curse me, call down your anger upon my head, but do not crush me with your grief. I know how guilty I am, how deeply you must hate and abhor me. The weight of your anger, however, I should be able to bear as a well-deserved punishment, but the weight of your grief I cannot endure."

The old man slowly lifted his bowed head, and fixed his eyes on the Baron with a sorrowful expression, saying, —

"Why should I hate you? How could I be angry? My grief is too great to leave any room for anger. You have deprived this heart of the greatest treasure it possessed. You have murdered its joy; but you see you did it so thoroughly that you did not leave me the consolation of cursing you in my just indignation."

"At the same moment I crushed your heart, a chord burst in my own, and pangs more acute than those you have suffered have pursued me. O, with my life, with my whole fortune, would I have brought back *her* life and expiated my fault!"

"I believe you, and have I not said that you did not even give me the consolation of cursing you? Therefore rise; not before me, but before God ought you to kneel."

The Baron rose, and the old man seated himself while he continued: —

"The fate which befell me and my poor child was the result of deep-rooted and most unfortunate prejudices. I — a simple working-man, endowed by nature with a mind which, perhaps, did not suit very well with my ignorance — wished to give my children the knowledge I myself lacked, and through a good education to cultivate their talents as well as raise them above the rude surroundings among which I had passed my days. Ah! I forgot one thing: that even if a boy can succeed in elevating himself by his knowledge to a better and more respected position in society, a girl cannot, unless she is raised by her husband. Virtue, culture, knowledge, and genius cannot make the gardener's daughter anything but a young girl who is not considered entitled to appear among cultivated people. She is a poor being, who, on account of her education, is thrust out of the circle in which she was born, without the doors which lead to the cultivated world being

opened to her. This education and the consciousness of her mental worth will generate an inward dissatisfaction with the world, which does not wish to receive her in any circle. What injustice society constantly commits towards woman! What does a thinking mind, a warm and devoted heart, avail her? She is anyhow doomed to be a slave whose whole value and independence comes from man. They say, Give woman education! Of what use is it to her, as things now stand. Man will not consider her as fully entitled to life's advantages as he. No; she is a minor, a child, unless she unites her fate to his, and thus becomes worthy of some little privileges. There is something contemptible, degrading to humanity, in the part that man in his all-absorbing self-idolatry has decreed woman. But why speak of it? My poor child was only one of the thousand examples illustrating the fact that if a woman is born of the people and is ever so well educated or richly endowed by nature, it is impossible for her to raise herself by her attainments above the sphere in which she was born. The most ignorant, the most insignificant woman, belonging to a better social class, will, in spite of all this, look down upon the gifted woman, simply because she is a gardener's daughter." The old man ceased; the Baron regarded him with an expression of astonishment. After a pause Bergström resumed: —

"Very well, she could not love any of her equals! Then she met on life's great thoroughfare a youth, belonging to the caste to which her cultivated mind entitled her, but from which prejudice excluded her. Her love, her weakness, her fall, — all is, under such circumstances, pardonable. And *he*, this youth brought up in these prejudices against the children of the people, sees in the young girl only a flower placed in his path, which for his own pleasure he plucks and then throws away. Is he the one most deserving of punishment? Is it upon him, the thoughtless youth, that the curse ought to fall? Or is it not rather upon the parents, who from generation to generation allow their sons to grow up with a contempt for the children of the masses? Ah, Herr Baron! not upon you would I have cast my malediction, but certainly upon your parents, your mother, who did not instil into you greater respect for the working-man's children, his only wealth, than for those whom birth, affluence, happiness, and pride protect. You sacrificed my daughter, covered her with shame, and — sent her to an untimely grave. Ah! if you in your frivolity could have measured how I loved her, you would shudder at yourself. She was the light of my eyes. Still I forgive you; it is social prejudice that I do not forgive."

The old man rose to go. The Baron approached him, saying, —

"Will you refuse to press my hand in adieu?"

"No! I have forgiven you. 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven,' say the Scriptures, and I humble myself before these teachings. Here is my hand. Let the sorrow which you have heaped upon me in your heedlessness teach you a lesson, so that you may instil into the minds of your sons respect for innocence and virtue wherever they are found. You men of rank show your nobility by other acts than spreading immorality and wretchedness among the lower classes. How do you expect to find honor, virtue, and respect for the weaker in the people, *the nation*, when those who stand above them do not set the example? The masses are governed by their instincts, and if they are not directed towards the right, by the example of the enlightened and cultivated, these instincts will one day degenerate and entirely ruin society." The old man pressed the Baron's hand and left.

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When Bergström came out from the hotel, he wended his way to the Doctor's abode.

"Is my son at home?" inquired he of the servant.

"No, not yet."

"Well then, I will wait for him"; and with this the old man went into the library.

About three o'clock the Doctor entered, and found his father sitting there absorbed in the perusal of the newspapers. With an expression of both love and respect Richard greeted him.

"I needed to see you, Richard," said the elder Bergström, retaining his son's hand in his, and looking him tenderly in the eyes. "Do you know whom I met to-day, my son?"

"No, father. You look agitated."

"I have met Silfverkrona!"

"Ah! and the sight of him has called forth your anger. Yes, I understand what you must have felt; for when I saw him again, I had a feeling of bitter indignation. Still there is much in him that makes one sometimes feel inclined to forgive the evil he has done."

"Feel inclined," repeated Bergström. "I *have* forgiven him. When I stood by Alfhilda's coffin and saw him crushed and despairing, I forgave him, although I was then under the influence of an overwhelming grief, and could not be sufficiently magnanimous to give him the consolation of knowing that the father forgave the sorrow he had heaped upon him. But to-day, my son, I have said, 'I forgive you; you were young and did not calculate the consequences of the passion for the gratification of which you sacrificed my child and me.' I thought, when I saw him crushed before me, May the one who feels himself without sin, cast the first stone; I will not do it."

"God knows whether I, my father, am able to be as magnanimous," replied Richard.

"And why not?" The old man fastened his clear eyes on his son. "You ought to be more so than I, because you by your knowledge and culture have learned to apply the doctrine of reconciliation. And besides, my son," — the old man laid his hand on Richard's shoulder, — "who can answer for how he would have acted in the Baron's place, educated as he was, and governed by a violent passion? Perhaps you and I would not have been better, but far worse. 'Judge not that ye be not judged.' When I can forgive, you also ought to be able to do it; and if your sister was dear to you, then do not hate the one she loved."

Silently, but with deep emotion, Richard pressed his father's hand.

"Why I finally came here, my dear Richard, was to tell you the resolution I took after the meeting with the Baron. I went there in answer to an advertisement for a gardener, which the Baron had inserted. The sight of him and the cause which led me there made me decide upon something which you have long desired, namely, to lay down the spade and spend my old age with my arms crossed and in rest."

"Father," exclaimed Richard gladly, shaking his hand, "how happy you make me by this decision! You shall share my solitary home, which will then no longer appear to me solitary and deserted."

"No, my boy. The old man would not thrive in your fine rooms, and besides you said to me this morning that you intended to go abroad. I have not yet decided how I shall regulate my life. I would rather spend the remainder of it in the country; but as I said, I have not yet thought over the matter. Besides, I have promised to remain where I am until that haughty old woman gets some one else in my place."

The conversation was here interrupted by some one who asked, —

"Is the Doctor at home?"

"Yes; please walk in," was the servant's answer.

Directly afterwards Major Qvickfelt

entered the library, and greeted the Doctor with the words, —

"Good day, my dear friend! I am just as if I had been shot from a cannon, so quick has it gone. You must know, my friend, that Silfverkrona has just now informed me that you are a cousin of my sister Charlotte's husband."

"Very true, dear sir; but here stands my father, uncle to Ekeberg, and who knew him better than I. I was only a boy of twelve when he died."

The Major and the elder Bergström exchanged a cordial shake of the hand.

Eight days after this the Doctor had gone abroad. The Major returned to Rönby, and Bergström went with him to spend the summer there. The stubborn and proud old man had, however, accepted the invitation only on the condition that he might pay his board, and as an occupation take charge of the garden and the greenhouse.

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Who among the favorites of fortune has not visited various watering-places? I will therefore, my dear reader, conduct you to one of these, no matter which; and you must excuse me for giving it a fictitious name, as I do not dare to give the right one. Several of the persons in this little narrative are still living, and might, if I mentioned so openly where they stayed, be afraid of being recognized. We will call the watering-place in question Dörby.

It was the beginning of July. A numerous assembly had come there to regain their health, or to kill time. One beautiful, sunny morning several elderly ladies were sitting on the spring-board outside the parlor. To judge from the activity of their tongues, one could conclude that they constituted the gossips of the place.

"Well, my dear Fru Öfverstinna, it must have been very pleasant for you to meet a good friend. I mean the Professorskan von Krug. She arrived yesterday, did she not?" said Fröken Knarrensköld, leaning forward to Öfverstinnan Strölkrans.

"Certainly, but it is likely to be rather embarrassing, as young Count Stormhjelm and the Countess also arrived, and intend to remain here. You can well imagine, my friends, that it will not be very pleasant for me, who often saw the Count with the Von Krugs when he was a betrothed lover, and who know the cause of the break, at once to maintain my old friendship with the Professorskan and yet not resign my acquaintance with the amiable Count."

"I realize it full well; but what caused the breaking of the engagement?"

"It would be exceedingly pleasant to know!" exclaimed all the ladies, leaning forward, in order to learn something from the Öfverstinnan which might be changed into a little innocent scandal.

"It all seems to have been a little love-affair, not very honorable either, which Albertine had with her mother's gardener, and which the Count discovered, so that, instead of presenting himself at the required time, he sent back the ring. You can conceive what a hard blow that was to the proud Sophie von Krug. She and the poor old fellow, her husband, sat all dressed up waiting for the Count, when the returned ring came upon them like a thunder-bolt. God knows whether the old man ever recovered from that blow. I really think that it contributed to break his health."

"Very probable! highly probable!" exclaimed the ladies, in chorus. "That Fröken von Krug is such a light-minded girl!"

"A gardener! is it not frightful to be in love with such a man?"

"Yes, and to give occasion to scandal, that is shocking! My girls are not allowed to associate with her," exclaimed a mother.

"Nor mine, either," said another.

"But, my friends, do not, for God's sake, mention me as the spokesman!"

"Never! But we will keep away from that set. The mother proud, and the daughter light-minded! No, I thank you. How do affairs stand since the death of the husband?"

"O, well enough! Have you heard of that absurd will? That speaks sufficiently for the matter, and shows best how displeased the old man was with his wife and daughter."

"My dear, how did it run?" asked one of the ladies.

"Why, the son seems to have received the whole property; but the mother and daughter only a stipulated sum for their support."

"Gracious, how strange! Well, it is plain to be seen that the father was provoked. Do you know, my dear, whether the Justice is with his mother?" This question was asked by a lady who had three marriageable daughters.

"No, I think not. The mother and he seem to be at variance, all on account of the daughter's bad behavior with the gardener."

"There comes Count Stormhjelm. His father died six weeks ago; that is the reason he wears mourning," said the Öfverstinnan.

"To whom is he married?"

"Would you believe it, ladies, there is no one who knows!"

The Count passed by the ladies without greeting the Öfverstinnan, who had just put on a smile and an obliging air, so as to respond to his greeting with a suitable expression.

"Gracious, the Count did not salute the Öfverstinnan!" exclaimed Fröken Knarrensköld, with a certain exultation in her look.

"He is near-sighted," replied the Öfverstinnan, rising, and taking her departure.

"*The good* Öfverstinnan, she is too foolish; she always imagines that people know her, and talks continually about her acquaintance with Count this and Countess that."

"Yes; and when all comes about, these acquaintances are near-sighted," observed another of the ladies. This sally was received with much merriment.

Then they separated in order to spread the story of Fröken von Krug's love for the gardener. They spared no pains to prepare her an unpleasant reception from the company at the springs, by placing her in silent disrepute, — an exceedingly kindly effort in our Christian times! So perverted are our ideas of right, that without a shadow of remorse we repeat what we hear about our neighbors, even if these reports attack their honor.

The following morning, when the company were assembled, the Professorskan and Albertine entered the saloon. A large part of those present moved in the same society with the proud Professorskan.

Most of them greeted her and Albertine coldly, and hastened by; others again pretended not to see them; only a few approached as old acquaintances. Among the latter was Herr Ekström's wife. She had always been slighted by the Professorskan and treated with a certain condescension. She spoke long and cordially with them, although her Grace's answers were short and her whole demeanor haughty.

"I must inform you that Count Stormhjelm and the Countess are at the springs, and will probably be seen here to-day," said Fru Ekström."

"Ah, indeed!" was her Grace's answer. "To whom is he married?"

"It is not known."

Albertine had now taken her glass of water, and they walked through the saloon. The young girl's whole appearance was sickly. There was no longer any trace of the fresh, blooming Albertine. It could be read in every feature

that she had passed through a severe illness.

Just as they were advancing towards the entrance, a young couple appeared at the door, dressed entirely in black. At the sight of them her Grace was nailed to the spot, and Albertine exclaimed, "Minna!" To which the young lady on the Count's arm responded by crying, "Albertine!" and, disengaging herself from her husband's arm, she hastened towards the latter, seized her two hands, and faltered in a voice trembling with emotion, —

"At length I am allowed to see you again." The tears glistened in Minna's eyes, and all that her heart contained of pure and tender feeling shone forth in the look with which she regarded Albertine.

The Count and the Professorskan had remained transfixed. Finally the Count remembered how many eyes were upon them, and that they would attract attention if they stood there in this way like a pair of statues; therefore he approached the Professorskan, saying, —

"I beg your Grace to excuse my wife for detaining you; but her joy at seeing the Fröken is so great that she forgets that we are surrounded by so many curious eyes."

Her Grace bent her head in silence. To speak was to her impossible.

This Minna, whom she had detested on account of her low origin, this girl who had been her daughter's waiting-maid, was now Countess Stormhjelm, — was the wife of the man the Professorskan had so eagerly desired to have for her son-in-law. Ah, it was a bitter humiliation when the proud woman thought that Minna would take precedence of her, that she belonged to this aristocratic family of which the Professorskan had so longed to become a member! With these agitating reflections it was utterly impossible for her to get a word over her lips.

Minna had put her arm in Albertine's, and had drawn her out of the saloon. This move left her Grace and the Count no alternative but to continue the walk at each other's side. Then, to avoid being the object of everybody's gaze, they both went out into the park.

Minna and Albertine had seated themselves in a remote place, where Minna poured out all her joy at seeing Albertine again. She wept, she laughed, she covered Albertine's hands with kisses and tears. Any coherent conversation between them during this outburst of a true and sincere joy could not take place. The young Countess gave entirely up to it. Finally, Albertine inquired, —

"But, Minna, how have you become the wife of this man? And how long have you been married?"

"Two months! How I became his wife you shall know by and by, not now; now I must enjoy the felicity of having you again undisturbed."

The Professorskan and the Count drew near. Minna rose at their approach, and whispered to Albertine, "This afternoon I shall visit you." Then she pressed Albertine's hand to her lips, and went to her husband, whose arm she took. In passing she made an obeisance to the Professorskan, but without saying a word.

Fru von Krug and Albertine did not return to the saloon. The Professorskan had felt hurt by the coldness and reserve with which her acquaintances treated her, and then she needed to be alone to contend with all the indignation, the disappointed hopes, and the humiliation which Minna's marriage with the Count occasioned her. She had to consider how she ought to act, whether she should leave or remain; all this induced her to give up the water-drinking for that day, and return to her abode instead. Not a word had the mother and daughter exchanged in regard to the meeting with Minna and the Count.

This meeting, however, had left an expression of joy on Albertine's sad face. On reaching their apartments, the Professorskan shut herself up in hers, and Albertine nestled down in a corner of the sofa with a book, in the perusal of which she was absorbed.

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Two hours after the water-drinking ceased, we find Count and Countess Stormhjelm in a little cabinet belonging to the suite they had hired for the season.

The Countess sits leaning back in an easy-chair attired in a white *peignoir*, ornamented with lace, ribbons, and embroidery. Her black hair is arranged with exquisite taste, so that the whole wealth of the luxuriant tresses is displayed. Her little feet, incased in a pair of satin slippers, rest on a cushion, and she is playing in a certain wilful and coquettish way with a rose, the leaves of which she pulls to pieces one by one.

The Count paces the floor in an apparently irritated state of mind, which does not seem to make the slightest impression on the young Countess. She occasionally fastened her brown eyes upon him, but with complete indifference.

"My dear," said she, yawning, "are you about through your harangue? I assure you that it affects me like an anodyne. Can you tell me what you intend by all this talk? Verily I do not understand a single word of it. You seem to me like a tragic actor, who with much pathos declaims his part — to empty walls."

Minna began to laugh heartily.

The Count stopped before her with a flushed face, and exclaimed in an angry tone, —

"Do you mean to make fun of me?"

"Not bad, my dear; you have a talent for the stage; but you ought to *have accompanied* that phrase with an appropriate gesture; it would have been more imposing." Minna laughed again.

The Count crossed his arms and looked at his wife, saying, —

"Be so good as to give me an answer to what I said."

"About what? Whether I mean to make fun of you? Good gracious, yes!"

"Do you intend, in spite of my express wish, to renew your friendship with Albertine, although you thereby offend your husband and place him in a painful position?"

"Yes, I do." Minna rose from her recumbent posture. "My heart has only contained a single tender feeling, which fills it so entirely that there is no room either for gratitude or friendship towards any one else on earth. This tenderness, this all-absorbing affection, belongs to Albertine. So do not ask me to sacrifice it for *you*, while on the contrary I would sacrifice you for it without any hesitation. You ask whether I intend to renew the friendship between us. It has never been broken. I intend to sun myself in her presence, to warm up and gladden my soul by spending hours at her side."

"But I, your husband, say it must not be. I detest this girl, and my wife shall not have her for a friend."

"And who can prevent me? What can keep me from visiting her, receiving her, and being with her?" asked Minna.

"I."

"In what way?"

"By forbidding you to do it."

"Bah! To make a wife a slave to a man's will one of two things is demanded, she must either love or fear him, and I do neither."

The Count's eyes rested on the young woman. She was indescribably charming with her large flashing eyes, in spite of the irregularity of her features.

"You neither love nor fear me," repeated the Count, slowly.

"That I do not love you you ought

to know, as I told you so, emphatically, when you proposed, and yet you persisted in wishing to have me for a wife. Fear you? For that it is requisite that I should feel alarm for your outbursts of anger, — and this is not the case; they seem to me ridiculous, and form little breaks in the daily monotony, — or that I should be afraid of displeasing you, a thing which is perfectly indifferent to me." Minna had now plucked all the leaves from the rose. "Give me a rose from the vase," added she.

During this speech the Count changed color several times. He threw himself down in a chair standing opposite, and said, with a voice full of resentment, —

"Is it right to speak so to your husband? What idea can you have of your duty as a wife when you employ such language?"

"Right! my dear, that is a word I never heard mentioned in the Professorskan's house, and should my ideas about it be somewhat obscure, you must blame her. As far as my duties are concerned, I say to myself, What idea can I have about them? You offered me your hand because I had wounded your self-love, because I had once dared to say that I never could love a man who, like you, tried to force a girl to become his wife against her will. As you could not conquer me through humiliation, you wished to compel me to love you out of gratitude, because you made me a countess. Then you thought that you would, in your turn, gain the unlimited right to wound, humble, and crush me with your pride and indifference. As incomplete as my ideas of right may be, it seems to me that yours are yet worse."

"Minna, Minna, beware of driving me to any extreme, and remember how unbending my will is! Therefore do not irritate me, for — "

"You will repent, and then beg for a friendly glance from me, a smile, which I might not be inclined to grant you. You constantly forget one thing: that, during the game your pride drove you to play with a poor girl, you had the misfortune actually to fall in love with her although her heart remained cold. In our contests I shall always be victorious, because my indifference never forsakes me. Ring for my maid; I desire to dress."

"Listen to me, Minna! If you defy me and visit Albertine, I will leave this place immediately."

"You are welcome to, but I shall remain."

"No, you shall go with me!" exclaimed the Count, springing up.

"How do you intend to manage it?"

"If you do not go voluntarily, it shall be by force."

"Then I will cry for help, and inform the whole company of your tyranny towards me. But let us finish. I am tired, and if you keep on longer I shall be angry. Therefore ring for Annette, so that she can dress my hair."

"It is not necessary, you are all right as you are."

"Am I all right this way?" exclaimed Minna coquettishly, running her small fingers through her hair. She had assumed a mischievous air.

"O Minna, how can you be such a demon!" cried the Count, who was unable to turn his eyes from her. A sigh heaved his breast.

Minna shrugged her shoulders and exclaimed impatiently, —

"Why do you not ring?"

"Give me your hand first," entreated he, looking at her with an expression which showed plainly that this man, who had built all his power upon the strength of his will, had found his match in the young and capricious woman. She gave him a frigid glance, jumped up and seized the bell-cord, while she said in a vexed tone, —

"It is remarkable that you never do what I ask of you; but I — I must stand prepared and give you my hand, smile

and be amiability itself, whenever you command, and that too after being tormented by you for two whole hours. I hope you will leave me in peace while I am dressing."

"Minna, do not be angry, let us make up; and give me your hand, in token of reconciliation."

"No, I will not. The only way in which I can be let alone seems to be to lock myself up. Now go, or you will not have a glimpse of me for several days. You see that I am in a mood to keep my word."

The Count left, for he knew by experience that she could torment him beyond endurance.

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Between five and six o'clock Minna called at the Professorskan's abode. On entering the hall she met Martha, who positively declared that the Professorskan would not receive Ma'm'selle Ekeberg.

"That may be, dear Martha," answered Minna, laughing, "but you certainly will not deny Countess Stormhjelm entrance to the Fröken, and my name is no longer Ekeberg, but Stormhjelm."

Martha stared at her. In the mean time the Countess herself opened the door Martha tried to close to her, and entered Albertine's room. Martha, on the contrary, went in to her Grace.

"What do you wish?" asked the Professorskan, looking sharply at the bold servant who dared to disturb her.

"I consider it my duty to tell her Grace that the Fröken has company." Martha pointed to the door which separated the two rooms.

"Whom?"

"Ma'm'selle Minna, who —"

"Is now Countess Stormhjelm."

"Ah, is she a countess?"

"Yes, *my niece*" — the Professorskan laid strong emphasis on the word — "is married to Count Stormhjelm. Do you *understand that you* have never known her in any other capacity than as my niece?"

"Perfectly," answered Martha, courtesying.

"Can you remember whether any of my guests or any of those who visited me ever saw Minna?"

"No, I think not. Your Grace expressly commanded that she should not show herself."

"That is well. Minna does not exist; only my niece, Countess Stormhjelm."

A light knock at the door interrupted the conversation. Martha opened it, and Öfverstinnan Strålkrans stepped in.

"My dear Sophie," exclaimed the Öfverstinnan, "I could not refrain from calling on you and informing myself about your health. You disappeared so suddenly this morning that I feared the meeting with Count Stormhjelm had excited you in some way."

"Why should it excite me?" asked her Grace sharply, and looked at her friend in a peculiarly haughty manner.

We do not consider it necessary to relate all that the Öfverstinnan said in her philanthropic efforts to wound and humiliate her friend the Professorskan. She repeated to her the same story, about the broken engagement which she had that morning imparted to her companions in gossip. She also informed the Professorskan that opinion was against her, and that she, as a true friend, advised her and her daughter to leave Dörby and go to some other watering-place, so as to escape derision.

Straight and stiff, with a high color in her face, the Professorskan had listened to her good friend's scandalous story and offensive advice. When the Öfverstinnan was at last obliged to pause in order to take breath, the Professorskan answered, —

"My daughter and I shall remain here. We have no reason to leave Dörby, as all that you have told me is in opposition to the truth."

"Ah, my dear Sophie, you do very wrong in not listening to a friend's advice," assured the Öfverstinnan, with feigned sympathy, "especially as they say that your daughter, in that love-intrigue with the gardener, compromised herself so irretrievably, that even the much esteemed Doctor Bergström, notwithstanding your husband in his will chose him as his son-in-law, did not consider himself bound to take Fröken von Krug for a wife, but went abroad to escape his good fortune."

"Ah! so they assert that the Doctor did not wish to marry *my daughter*. Well, it is good that I know it."

Her Grace rose and looked sharply at her friend, adding, —

"If you feel as I do, we will leave people's talk; I am not at all curious to know what they say, and beg to be excused from all confidences of the sort. Perhaps you will allow me to introduce you to my niece, Countess Stormhjelm, who is just now with my daughter. This ought to prove that she is not in as ill-repute as you assert."

Without waiting for an answer from the astonished Öfverstinnan, her Grace opened the door between the two rooms and obliged her to step in. Fru von Krug went to Minna, who sat perfectly still on the sofa, and forced her to rise by introducing the Öfverstinnan.

Minna's manner, when she greeted the two ladies, rivalled her Grace's in haughtiness, and the Öfverstinnan thought, —

"The Countess does not deny her relationship to the intolerable, arrogant Sophie, who was so puffed up that she might have burst when she said, 'My niece the Countess.'"

The Professorskan turned to Minna, and said in her peculiar cold and measured way, —

"You must excuse me for disturbing you and Albertine, but the fact is that the Öfverstinnan has informed me of what people are pleased to allege as the cause of the break between your husband and my daughter when they were betrothed."

Word for word, without troubling herself about the stings this narration gave Albertine, the Professorskan repeated to her daughter the whole discreditable report which the Öfverstinnan had put in circulation. She omitted, however, the part which referred to the Doctor.

The Öfverstinnan, provoked at this proceeding on her friend's part, and surmising that the rumor about the Doctor must contain some seeds of humiliation for the Professorskan, as she failed to mention it, was not tardy in adding what people asserted to be the reason of the Doctor's journey abroad, etc. With secret joy she saw the Professorskan become ashy-pale with indignation.

Leaning back in a corner of the sofa, with a contemptuous expression, Minna listened to this whole web of scandalous fabrications. Albertine's face was pale, cold, and immovable. Minna, who had been accustomed to read it from childhood, saw that her idol suffered. This suffering she wished to avenge on the malicious talebearer and the merciless mother, and in accordance with her desire she said, —

"It is singular that persons with the shadow of a claim to culture wish to soil their lips by repeating all these degrading falshoods. Do you know, madam," added she, turning to the Öfverstinnan, "I can inform you of the real cause of the break between my cousin and my husband. Albertine never wished to have him, and therefore she broke the engagement, notwithstanding this step was in direct opposition to Aunt von Krug's will. Count Stormhjelm can tell you this himself, if you take the trouble to ask him. As far as Doctor Bergström is concerned, Albertine is his *fiancée*, and their betrothal will be announced on his return. Is there not reason, Fru Öfverstinna, why you now, in your turn, should let the gossips know all this?"

It would have been worthy a painter's pencil to sketch the expressions which Minna's words called forth on these three faces. The Professorskan flung an enraged glance on the young Countess, as she saw clearly that if she contradicted this statement in the Öfverstinnan's presence, only a new and still more scandalous story would arise from it. The Öfverstinnan, on the contrary, looked abashed, and Albertine's face was covered with a rosy tint.

They exchanged some few words about indifferent things, and then the Öfverstinnan took leave to consult with her gossiping confederates and form commentaries upon what she had heard.

After her departure a pause ensued, which for Albertine was very oppressive. She knew that an explanation would take place between her mother and cousin, which would be anything but agreeable.

Although Albertine did not love her mother, she had from natural instinct a disinclination to hear words which would wound this mother, in whose presence she froze.

Minna and the Professorskan regarded each other for a few minutes, as if each wished to force the other to lower her glance. Finally Minna broke the silence. She leaned back a little against the sofa, saying, —

"That I have just allowed myself to be introduced as your niece, madam, proceeded solely from respect for Albertine, as I had made up my mind that Countess Stormhjelm should just as little own any relationship to you, as you wish to acknowledge Ekeberg's daughter for your niece. Chance has ordered otherwise, and in spite of the resentment your behavior towards me has left in my heart, my love for Albertine comes up and makes me incapable of paying you back with the same coin. You, like me, wish that we had never met; but your own arbitrary course of action with Stormhjelm and Albertine compels you now to treat me as a relative, as you would otherwise have to suffer the consequences of it through the scandalous reports which are going the rounds. I, madam, know you too well not to be aware that you are a slave to public opinion, and that you will subject yourself to anything rather than be an object of scandal."

The Professorskan's face had become red and pale by turns, and her eyes had a cold gleam, when she answered, —

"That is true, — before the world we must be relatives, so that the world may not laugh in scorn; but Countess Stormhjelm is as little my relative as Ma'm'selle Ekeberg, when the world does not see us. I now ask you in my turn by what right you meddle in my family affairs, and assert that Doctor Bergström is engaged to my daughter?"

"By that of the truth. Albertine's father in his last moments expressed his desire, emphatically, that she and the Doctor should become a pair. Is the word of a dying person binding or not? I have always heard that it is accustomed to be followed conscientiously, and as I presumed that this case was no exception, I have with my answer only repelled a fresh attack against your daughter's honor. Should you fail to respect your departed husband's last wish, I hope Albertine has reverence enough for her father's will to hold it sacred. Do you think, madam, that it would have sounded better if I had said, Albertine's father and her own heart have chosen the Doctor for her husband, but her mother, in her pride, opposes it? Madam, you would then have been laughed at."

"Countess, you forget yourself," exclaimed the Professorskan, straightening herself up. "You are under my roof, and I do not allow any one to insult me; if you intend to continue in this way, I will close my door to you."

"You are welcome to close yours, but not Albertine's, as I would then proclaim aloud to every one who wished to hear

it, that I, your niece, as you yourself introduced me, was once a chambermaid in your house. My pride will never withhold me from taking my revenge." The Countess rose. "Let us therefore avoid all *tête-à-têtes* as carefully as possible." She made an obeisance to the Professorskan, pressed Albertine's hand, and left the room.

"You sit silent and allow your mother to be insulted" burst out the Professorskan.

"Minna has only spoken the truth," replied Albertine, coldly.

The Professorskan passed a sleepless night. The next morning she had a headache and a sensation of dizziness, something which she had often been troubled with during the last few months in which her pride had been so thwarted.

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A day or two after this, Minna and Albertine sat confidentially on the latter's sofa.

"You wish to know how I became a countess," said Minna; "it was no easy matter, I can tell you, but still it went faster than I had dared to hope. At his first visit, words escaped Stormhjelm which showed how deeply imbittered he was against you. Then an irresistible desire awoke within me to captivate him, in order to avenge all that you had suffered. A short time afterwards Jenny told me some things that the Baron had said about him, from which I concluded that if a woman wished to succeed in charming this obstinate and contrary person, she must show him coldness and contempt. I did my best. From the moment I made up my mind to become his wife, and forever render him harmless to you, I began to feel better. I missed you just as much, it is true; but my mind had an occupation. In short, my Count remained in the vicinity without any one being able to explain the reason. One fine day in April he proposed. I declared to him that if I said 'yes,' it would only be because I wished to become a countess. Ah, my beloved Albertine, you, with your lofty soul, do not know how satanic a woman can be when she has chosen a man as a victim! After I had literally broiled him on a slow fire for three weeks, I gave my consent, and in the six weeks which elapsed between my 'yes' and our wedding, I retracted my consent one moment and gave it back to him the next. I was capricious, cold, and spiteful, to that degree that I more than once received a serious remonstrance from Aunt Malin; but I knew the character of the man to whom I was going to link my fate, and realized that my power lay in my caprice and indifference. The same rôle I continue still, and shall probably continue it my whole life through, unless I wish to exchange my capacity of mistress for that of slave, and this I am not inclined to do. The very moment I became a mild, tender, and loving wife, like Aunt Malin, he would forget or oppress me. There is something of the Evil One in him, which makes resistance and opposition the only means of stimulating his feelings."

"But then you do not love him?"

"No! Of what use would it be? I have not, like Jenny, had those transporting examples of domestic virtues and love since childhood; therefore I cannot contain them in my heart. I have only loved you, and have no room for any other love. The sight of you, the sound of your voice, your caresses, — these are the only noble needs of affection that I feel. You are my felicity, and for you I could sacrifice everything. The rest of the world appears to me like chessmen, which I move according to my pleasure. Besides, I enjoy being young, beautiful, rich, noble, and courted. I am not a little delighted to see that my husband is in love with me. Had I become as exclusively attached to a man

as I am to you, I should have sacrificed all, — honor, parents, brothers, and sisters for him; and not, like you, have wasted my life, my youth, and my strength of soul in passive waiting."

"Ah, Minna, so you say in your thoughtlessness, without reflecting upon life and its duties; but I, who have learned from him to respect them, know what my duties are as a daughter and woman, and therefore I must wait, trust, and hope, — trust in the God Richard has taught me to love, and patiently bend before the will of the man who possesses my whole heart. I know his proud soul and admire it. He, a son of the people, will not force himself into a family where the mother looks down upon him. He does not wish to snatch the daughter from her, he demands that the mother shall give her to him. He could not endure the thought of people believing that his wife had elevated him. No, he wishes to show that it is he who has raised her to himself. He is determined to force my mother to respect him through his nobility of character, and I feel proud and happy to be loved by such a man."

"You may be right," replied Minna, seriously, "but it would be impossible for me to act so. The education you have received has left your nobler instincts slumbering in the depths of your soul, and they only needed to be roused to life; but with me, on the other hand, they have been stifled, and but one has survived its dead brethren. This one is my love for you. Besides, I am selfish, vain, arrogant, and overbearing, — a natural result of being surrounded by these feelings from childhood. I have been oppressed by them, and they have been constantly reflected in my soul, until the image has become steadfast. Such am I, such is Albert also, and such shall I remain."

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It is with humiliations as with misfortunes, they never come single. This the Professorskan had to experience.

A little over a week had passed since her arrival at Dörby, when the Öfverstinnan one morning approached her as she was walking in the saloon.

"How are you, my dear Sophie? You look so pale," said the Öfverstinnan.

"I am perfectly well, my friend," answered the Professorskan, who felt intuitively that the Öfverstinnan had something very disagreeable in store.

"I am glad to hear it, as you have your son here. It was probably a great surprise for you to stumble over him. I suppose you have met the Justice?" The Öfverstinnan regarded her friend with a lurking expression.

The Professorskan walked stiff and straight by her side. Not a muscle moved in her face; only a dark flush covered her cheeks for a second, but disappeared as hastily, and she answered, —

"I have seen my son."

"Then he probably mentioned to you that he is in company with Mademoiselle Israelli?"

"No; he does not tell me of such things."

"But, my dear Sophie, it would certainly be more moral if he married her, instead of causing all this scandal. Only think of it, he is her attendant everywhere, and makes no secret of his intimacy with her. Just see!" The Öfverstinnan pointed to three persons who came into the saloon. The Professorskan looked unavoidably in the direction indicated.

The sight which met her eyes ought to have excited compassion, if her heart had been accessible to such a feeling. Supported on Sara's arm, Hagar advanced, — the personification of suffering. The period which had elapsed since the Professorskan saw her had destroyed every trace of youth. The pale, wasted features seemed to speak of a speedy

dissolution of the mortal tenement. Only the large, wondrous eyes were the same, with their magical expression and their entrancing goodness. On the other side of the young Jewess, almost as pale as she, walked Albert.

One could read in his stern, handsome features that the progress made by Hagar's illness had left marks in his soul which no time would be able to efface. If suffering had given an angelic expression to Hagar's eyes, it had, on the contrary, darkened every one of Albert's features.

Calumny itself was silenced for a moment at the sight of Hagar, whose whole appearance gave evidence that death followed her, and counted her steps.

Could it be an earthly love which bound the strong and healthy young man to this pale girl, shorn of all her beauty? Impossible. Reason ought to have told this to all these traducers who live upon slander and aspersion; but no! If they were struck dumb for a moment, it was only to take offence at him afterwards for lavishing upon a sickly, dying Jewess an attention which the young regarded as theirs by right, the old as an outrage against all that they considered proper.

What do calumny and envy care, if the victim they attack has only a few days to live? These demons cannot feel compassion, and are callous and indifferent to the wounds they occasion.

These three now drew near the Professorskan, who had looked at them for some moments in silence, to condemn them afterwards without mercy. When the mother and son found themselves opposite each other, they exchanged a glance which resembled two naked swords. Albert made a cold bow, which the Professorskan responded to with a scarcely perceptible inclination of the head, after which they passed by.

"Albert, will you not go and speak to your mother?" whispered Hagar.

"No, we have nothing to say to each other," answered Albert.

"And it is I who separate mother and son! Ah, Albert, if you really love me, do not allow me to be consumed by such a consciousness!"

"Poor angel!" murmured Albert. "I will visit my mother this afternoon, but do not ask me to speak to her now."

Hagar said nothing. After she had drunk her glass, they went into the park. Everybody avoided them. When Hagar seated herself on a spring-board, the ladies who were sitting there rose. Whether she perceived it or not, we do not know; but Albert noticed it, and there was a singularly dark flame in his eyes when he looked after them.

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That afternoon the door of Albertine's room opened, and Albert entered. At the sight of her brother she sprang up and threw herself on his neck.

"Albert, what an eternity since we saw each other!" exclaimed she.

"Yes, my poor child, I have not seen you since the will was opened," said he, disengaging himself from his sister's embrace. "Our father believed that he was doing so well when he appointed me your guardian; but he did not know what a neglectful guardian I should be." Albert seated himself. "Where is mother?"

"She has gone to call on Assessorskan D——."

"So much the better. I feel a great need of speaking with you. Richard was up to see me before his departure, and from him I heard that mother is as stubborn and unbending as ever, in spite of my father's wish; but verily I do not understand why you attach any importance to her consent, when father in his will plainly and clearly expressed his desire, and made me the executor of it; still that matter concerns you, not me."

Albert leaned his head on his hand, continuing, —

"Do you know of the cause of the break between mother and me?"

"No, but I can guess it."

"Let me hear."

"Your affection for Mademoiselle Israelli is the cause."

"True; well, what do you say about the matter?"

"I wish that she had been a Christian girl, and well in health; you would then have become happy. Your affection for her must be based upon her elevated qualities."

"You are right." Albert rose and began to walk to and fro as he spoke. "If you knew this wonderful girl, so richly endowed in heart and intellect, with a noble magnanimity in all her thoughts and feelings, you would realize all the despair which fills me at the certainty that she will die. How often have I not cursed the moment when the confession of my love passed my lips; for she had been attached to me before with a quiet affection, without thinking that I could become to her anything except a dear friend; but then — then followed such violent conflicts, such bitter outbreaks on my part, such frequent rebellions against the obstacles which impeded our union, that, exhausted by the contest, she became a victim to the heart-disease with which she had been threatened several years. She will die, and it is I, with my unrestrained and selfish passion, who have hastened her death! Ah, Albertine!" exclaimed he, stopping before his sister, "I would now without repining bear the fate which dooms us to remain friends only, if I could but buy back her life, and have the sweet consolation of spending my leisure moments conversing with her, listening to the sound of her voice, and admiring her thoughts. What remains to me when she is gone? Nothing."

*The door opened,* and Albert turned to see who entered. It was the Professorskan. She went towards her son with the words, —

"If you had not presented yourself here, I should have sent for you. Come into my room." The Professorskan went before, and Albert followed her, after which she closed the door.

"I must tell you that your connection with that woman gives occasion to so much scandalous talk here that I consider it my duty to interfere in the matter. Every well-bred man has the discrimination to conceal such connections and not cause offence by them."

Albert stood erect before his mother with an expression of bitterness in his eyes.

"You cannot be so blind as to chime in with all that foolish talk. Regard the object of these malicious interpretations, and say, does she look like a woman to whom I could be attached with a criminal love? You cannot possibly believe it, or do you think that I would show myself with her openly, if she did not possess full right to my respect?"

"I believe nothing, I only hear what people say, and I hope you have respect enough left for me, to get her away from here."

"This goes too far. At *her entreaty* I have come to you, and now you wish that I — I shall mortally insult this pure and suffering angel by inducing her to leave a watering-place because the people there try to sully her snow-white wings with base aspersions. No, I would bite my tongue off rather than have a single unkind word pass my lips to her who in innocence and virtue stands so high above us all!"

"Very well; then I will tell her, this artful and despicable woman who casts disgrace upon us both."

"Woe be unto you if you attempt to insult her!" exclaimed Albert, passionately; "for in my anger and contempt at such heartlessnes I shall become formidable. This Jewish girl, so deeply

despised by you, stands on the brink of the grave, and the hours she will remain on earth to spread a little light over my desolate life are numbered. Do not insult *her*, who has only had mild words for you, and beware of exciting my animosity again. The words I should then drop would be still more bitter than those I have uttered once before."

"To whom do you think you are speaking? You cannot mean to employ such language to your mother?" said the Professorskan, with a high head.

"No, not to *a mother*; such I have never possessed. If I had, I should not now be a shipwreck on life's ocean, but should have a haven, a comforter, on whose tender bosom I might breathe out my immeasurable grief. I should have a home, a family, a place of refuge, sacred and dear to my heart; but I have nothing of all this, and my whole ability to love has concentrated itself on Hagar. She will die; and nothing can recompense me for the loss, nothing on earth can console me. I have no tender tie in life after this breaks. I have never had a mother, only one who gave me life, — the only gift I have to thank you for, and even that you have taken pains to make me wish you had never bestowed. And now it is best for us to avoid any private conversation."

Albert bent his proud head and left.

When he was gone, the Professorskan leaned her head on her hand, and a few tears, drawn forth by an insufferable pain, fell down and left two wet stains on her dress.

This woman, governed by pride, vanity, and love of rule, yet had a heart, although this heart was covered up by these three main traits in her character. Her son had been her dearest child, probably the dearest thing she possessed next to herself, and now *he* had made her feel the burden of not being loved by her children. To hear him speak with coldness and bitterness of how poorly she had fulfilled her duty as a mother! that was a cruelly painful moment for the proud woman, deprived of her children's love.

A few days elapsed. People had almost finished their water-drinking for the day. On account of the rainy weather there were but few guests in the saloon. Among the eight or ten who remained was the Professorskan, but not Albertine; she had already left at her mother's order. Hagar, Albert, Count Stormhjelm, and the Öfverstinnan, as well as Fröken Knarrensköld, were also present.

The Professorskan was just on the point of drinking her last glass when Hagar, who that day was not attended by Sara, at the same instant reached hers forward. Hagar had a few moments before been an unobserved listener to a conversation between some ladies, who in the most merciless manner had branded her as Albert's mistress. The words had left deep wounds in the heart of the dying woman. In consequence of her suppressed emotion and an increased indisposition, she was seized with vertigo just as she raised the glass to her lips. It grew black before her gaze, and she felt as if she was falling into an abyss. Her eyes closed, and with a violent effort of her last strength she tried to take hold of something for support, and grasped the Professorskan's arm without knowing what she did. But at the touch of this hated woman Fru von Krug jerked herself aside, and Hagar, who at this instant completely lost consciousness, would have fallen to the floor, had not Albert, who had seen her unsteady motions and, was accustomed to these fainting-fits, hastened forward and received her in his arms.

"Ah, mother," murmured Albert, "did you not see that she would fall? Give me your smelling-bottle," added he, hastily, as a dark look spread over Hagar's face, and reached out his hand to his mother. This hand trembled, and every feature indicated despair.

"Never," answered the Professorskan, who felt irritated at the sight of her son's anxiety and tender care of this stranger. "Do you think your mother will assist your mistress?" added she, in a smothered voice.

"Here are smelling salts. Erik, get some water; go for the Doctor, Albert," exclaimed a clear voice, and Minna knelt at Hagar's side, laid her head against her breast, and with the assistance of the Count and Fröken Knarrensköld, devoted to her all possible care, while Albert ran for a physician, and her Grace left the place.

The Doctor soon succeeded in recalling Hagar to consciousness, but her strength was so exhausted that she was obliged to discontinue her water-drinking.

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One week from that time, after she had somewhat recovered, Hagar took her departure, accompanied by Sara and Albert. She was very ill, Sara was filled with sorrow, and Albert was in despair. The latter wrote the following words to his mother, —

"My mother: You have so willed, — we are irrevocably separated. I have no mother, you no son. I am henceforth only the guardian for your daughter. All other connection between us has ceased. You have in the most unfeeling manner refused to extend your aid to a suffering creature, and yet, through this insignificant act of humanity, shown towards her whom I revere and worship, you would have bound my affection and gratitude to you forever. You preferred to appear as a heartless woman, an unloving mother, who without sympathy passes by her son at the moment he suffers. Farewell, and may you better *fulfil* your calling of a mother towards *your daughter!*

"Albert von Krug."

Distinguished by the same characteristics as his mother, the proud and unbending son was unable to forgive her for daring to affront the woman he loved, and whom he placed high above her.

All these wounds which the Professorskan's heart and pride had received probably hastened the development of the affection of the eyes from which she had a long time suffered, but the closed lips had not opened to say a word to Albertine about it. God knows whether the proud dame could make up her mind to admit that her sight began to fail; but finally she was obliged to apply to the Doctor at the springs, and he examined her eyes.

"Madam, there are indications of cataract," said he.

"Then I am in danger of becoming blind?" Her voice trembled.

"We will try to prevent it," answered the Doctor.

He gave a few prescriptions; but at the end of the season the Professorskan could only with great difficulty recognize her acquaintances. One morning, just as Albertine finished dressing herself to go down to the saloon with her mother, the Professorskan entered; her step was slower, but her bearing was more confident than usual.

"You must attend your cousin to the spring; I cannot accompany you. We leave here to-morrow."

"Are you ill, mamma?" asked Albertine, who now looked at her mother and found her quite pale.

"No, I am not ill; but — "

The Professorskan sat down. Then she resumed with a firm and steady voice, —

"I must seek an oculist, I am on the point of becoming blind." The last word was uttered clearly and plainly.

"Blind!" exclaimed Albertine, taking a step towards her mother; but the latter's cold and immovable face checked her, and she remained still.

"O mother, mother, what a misfor-

tune!" faltered Albertine in an agitated voice.

"No misfortune is greater than one can bear. I desire that no one here shall be apprised of the affliction that has befallen me. I do not wish any compassion; neither do I mean to have any one pity me; your brother is no exception. I hope that you have sufficient respect left for me not to violate my wish."

There was something in the fortitude with which the Professorskan mentioned her approaching misfortune which inspired respect; Albertine seized her hand and kissed it, but without daring to express a word of sympathy.

The following day the Professorskan left Dörby for the capital. An hour after her departure we find Count and Countess Stormhjelm in their lodgings. She threw herself down in an easy-chair, in the worst of humors.

The Count exerted all his ability to calm her, but without success, for the young wife responded to all his friendly words with snappish retorts. Finally she burst out with unrestrained anger: —

"Can I be left in peace? Have you not heard what I said? I mean to leave this place immediately, for I shall be consumed with *ennui* if I am obliged to stay here alone with you, without the consolation of refreshing myself with the sight of Albertine. There, now go and give orders for our departure!"

"My dear Minna, do be reasonable! I have told you that I neither will nor can go until next week."

"Then I will go alone. I will immediately travel after Albertine to Stockholm." Minna sprang up and stamped her foot on the floor.

"In a week we will go," answered the Count, decidedly.

"Ah, indeed, you are determined to force me to remain, notwithstanding I do not wish to. But you will not have a *very pleasant time of it.*" And with this Minna darted into an adjoining room, the door was slammed behind her, and the key turned.

The Count looked after her and muttered, —

"It is God's punishment that I shall love that little demon."

The next morning Count Stormhjelm and his wife went to Stockholm. The Countess had a headache.

In spite of this compliance on her husband's part, she was very ungracious towards him.

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While describing the above scenes, we have entirely forgotten our old acquaintances at Rönby. At midsummer the two sons had returned home, this time cheerful and happy. To the Majorskan's great satisfaction, she found Ernst again calm and contented. None of them mentioned a word about his fancy.

Ernst tried, by redoubled attention, to show his mother his gratitude and increased love.

Baron Silfverkrona had taken a trip to Stockholm in the spring, and had returned in a gloomy state of mind. He had been away at the time of the Count's wedding, which, according to Minna's express desire, was celebrated very quietly with but few persons present.

After all this commotion the daily order had resumed its course at Rönby, with the exception that they had not seen the Baron for three whole weeks after his return from the capital, and that the old man Bergström was now a member of the family. When they had company, he never appeared, as he said he neither possessed the habits nor the education for social life. The old man was too proud to be anything but a gardener.

Midsummer day they had, as usual, been invited to Stjernebro; but the Baron was silent and uninterested. This

put Jenny out of spirits, so that the usually light-hearted girl had that day several attacks of ill-humor, and very few of the gentlemen were able to please her.

A week afterwards the Baron came to Rönby with a message from Aunt Sigrid to Fröken Jenny, asking her to go back with him to Stjernebro. The Majorskan referred to Jenny herself, and in a little while the Baron's droschka drove off with him and Jenny.

"You are not well disposed towards me, Fröken Jenny," began the Baron, "you are displeased; is it not so?"

"If not displeased, then something like it," answered Jenny, smiling; "for it always seems painful to me to see you a slave to your caprice. You see, Baron Fritz, I have accustomed myself to regard you as my brother, and therefore I can never refrain from telling you the truth. Ah! I lived in the happy conviction that you would no longer fall back into this dull indifference, now that you have once tasted of the sweet nectar which work and beneficence bestow upon the human heart."

"You are perfectly right in believing it. I can no longer be indifferent to life, but you know not what I have suffered. Just because I feel a deep need of pouring out my whole soul to you, have I asked Aunt Sigrid to invite you. Jenny, what you call indifference is a consuming anguish, concealed under the mantle of apathy. You, Jenny, with your noble heart, your sound principles and true womanly feeling, will be better able than any other to pass judgment upon me, and perhaps also give me some comforting words!"

"As a friend, a sister, I will respond to your confidence," said Jenny, "and forgive me if I judged you too severely; but my severity always proceeds from a lively desire to excite your interest for the right."

"And you have done it. You have carried out woman's beautiful part of being a mediator for the needy, and the star which ought to lead men to good and philanthropic deeds."

The remainder of the way they talked about the school, and the poor, about the improvements in agriculture the Baron intended to make, and matters of general interest.

Jenny had received a truly fine education. She had not acquired a multitude of worthless and showy accomplishments, but a thorough knowledge of those subjects which made her acquainted with life and its conditions, with nature and the aim of human existence. Consequently she expressed herself well on all the simpler questions of life, while at the same time she never ceased to be an amiable and attractive girl.

On reaching Stjernebro Jenny was received in the most cordial manner by Aunt Sigrid.

They chatted about a complicated pattern which one of Jenny's pupils was going to weave for Fröken Sigrid. Jenny looked at it, and praised her pupil. After all this came dinner.

When it was over, the Baron said, —

"You, aunt, have had Jenny all the forenoon, now I desire to say a few words to her. I would like to show the Fröken a picture."

"While we are waiting for coffee, you can talk together," said Fröken Sigrid, nodding kindly to her nephew.

The Baron and Jenny went up into the gallery. He stopped with her before the portrait which has been so much spoken of, saying, —

"Is she not beautiful?"

"Yes, truly beautiful, both in regularity of feature and depth of expression."

"Sit down, Jenny, and I will relate to you the young girl's history; but regard her closely, stamp her features well in your memory, so that you may conceive an interest for the poor unfortunate."

The Baron seated himself by the picture, and then resumed: —

"As you know, my uncle, Count Y——, owns several large estates and a considerable property. Some years ago he engaged a very excellent gardener, who was to attend to the large gardens of all three estates with the aid of assistants. My uncle had a mania for the cultivation of flowers. The gardener's name was Bergström, and he had been married twice. He had two children, one by each marriage. The son, the elder, was then a student; the daughter, full ten years younger, was a child.

"Bergström, a man that nature had endowed with a fine mind, had given his children as an inheritance remarkable soul gifts, which he had cultivated by a careful education. The son, a stately youth, was only at home on short visits during vacation. From his father he had learned to place his honor and peace of conscience highest of anything in the world. At the university he acquired knowledge, at home a simple and sound morality, accompanied by an example of the most scrupulous integrity in his father. The daughter was educated at home by a governess, who was richly rewarded by the little girl's aptitude. This beautiful, richly endowed child constituted the father's joy. For her he worked and subjected himself to all possible privations, although in his capacity of head-gardener on three estates, he had a very considerable salary.

"You remember that at twenty years of age I left Stjernebro and my little flame at Rönby, for I suppose you have not forgotten that. I was captivated with a certain little Jenny; you cannot fail to remember it?"

"Continue your story, I do not know that little Jenny," replied Jenny, blushing slightly, and smiling.

"Well then, I took a journey abroad, as it behooves a young man with my fortune. I was away a year, and returned to Sweden faithful to the memory of that little Jenny. At the invitation of my uncle I made on my way home a visit to the beautiful Svanebo, in the southern part of Sweden. From there I intended to go to Stockholm and then home. Would to God that I had never gone there!

"My aunt, Countess Y——, had, as ladies of rank are in the habit of doing, allowed Alfhilda Bergström to come up to her room when she was alone, so as to shorten the long hours by conversation and reading. It never entered her mind to open her doors to the gardener's daughter except when she was alone, and even then with a strict observance of the distance which their different social positions put between them.

"I arrived at Svanebo one beautiful afternoon in the beginning of May, and found my aunt in the hothouse with a young girl. Ah! contemplate the picture there, and you will still have but a faint idea of this being, who was a combination of all the physical beauty one can conceive of. You see only the dead image. I saw this ideally beautiful being full of youth, sparkling with life, and glowing with feeling and genius. I was so dazzled by the sight of her that I forgot to greet my aunt. Offended by this admiration of mine for the glorious vision I had before me, she said, in her somewhat cutting tone, —

"'Mademoiselle Bergström can return home.'

"The young girl courtesied, blushing, and went away. Ah, Jenny, my little friend at Rönby was soon forgotten, — all on earth was forgotten but *her*. I loved like a fool, a madman; and who would not have loved her? She was a combination of everything sweet, pure, and innocent, with a genius which would have entitled her to take a high place in any family circle whatsoever. The summer flew by without my knowing where the time had gone. The months had flown

like a minute in Time's immense ocean. I loved, and was loved. My aunt acted as if she saw nothing and heard nothing, but she never again asked Alfhilda to come up to her room. Finally aunt requested me to go. This was said in a tone which did not admit of any contradiction. The thought of separating gave me acute pain. Ah, Jenny, I am a wretch!" The Baron buried his face in his hands and became silent. A moment afterwards he resumed: —

"After the happiness I reaped, when I informed Alfhilda that we must separate, it was impossible for me to go. I postponed it from day to day, notwithstanding my aunt gave me frequent reminders. One morning my uncle proposed to me to make a visit in the neighborhood with him; although unwilling, I could not refuse. When I returned to Svanebo, Alfhilda and her father were gone. I waited, day after day, but they did not come back. Finally, after the lapse of two weeks, the father returned. Like a maniac I rushed upon the old man, asked after his daughter, and wished to know where she was.

"'You will nevermore see her, rash young man,' replied he, gravely. 'You have made her miserable, you have degraded her, and given your proud aunt the right to drive her from her house as a despicable creature. Go, or I will crush you like a worm!' A few days afterwards the father also removed.

"When with my aunt I raged in a perfect fit of passion. The next day I left for Stockholm without knowing what I should do. Then I began to search. The whole winter passed in these fruitless efforts, which I persisted in, because the old man Bergström remained in the capital, and I concluded from it that Alfhilda must be there too. Finally, in utter despair, I abandoned myself to my hopelessness, when one day a note was handed me, containing these lines, —

"'If you wish to see Alfhilda once more, then call on her immediately at Fru Ek's, No. —, New Square.'

"How I got there I do not know; but never has any way appeared to me so interminably long. Fru Ek, a lady with a mild, serious, and dignified appearance, conducted me into a tastefully furnished, but dimly lighted room. There on a sofa lay my Alfhilda; but no, it was not she, — it was the pale death angel who had borrowed her features. It was the shadow of that beautiful flower, which I had seen so fresh and luxuriant. I fell upon my knees and burst into sobs. Six weeks afterwards the crushed father stood by her coffin, and I pressed my lips to the little hand which death had made cold." Tears forced their way down the Baron's cheeks. A pause ensued.

"Shamefully driven away from my aunt's house," resumed the Baron, "oppressed by her fault and the consciousness of the sorrow she had drawn upon her father's upright head, my glowing rose faded away and died; but I — I her murderer lived, — lived to experience all the horrors of remorse. At first I thought that sorrow would kill me, but I was mistaken. Then I tried to kill my sorrow in the arms of pleasure. I became a profligate, and spent my nights in wild dissipation; but when I came home from these orgies, remorse again plunged its talons in my heart, and the alleviation I sought eluded me continually. Finally I returned here, — an apathetic, indifferent, and wretched being, incessantly pursued by one and the same image, one and the same memory, namely, the despairing father and the dead Alfhilda, who had perished in the bloom of her youth. The only diversion, the only true comfort I enjoyed, was when I was with you; but when you smiled at me with your fresh, innocent smile, the memory of her and my deed stole upon me, and I returned home, a prey to the most corroding remorse. In spite of all this, your presence had a beneficial effect upon me, and I

felt that only through you could I again become reconciled with life. Suddenly I remembered a promise made to the dying to look up a cousin's daughter, who was probably living with Professorskan von Krug. I became acquainted with the Professorskan, persuaded her to come here, and the rest you know.

"Now, Jenny, you have heard my story. Tell me what I shall do to make some little reparation to the old father whom I met at my last visit to Stockholm, and who is now staying at Rönby? Ah, Jenny, you ought to have seen this old man, with his face at once mild and stern, when he talked to me and had not a word of reproach for one who had robbed him of his life's dearest joy. O Jenny, I wish to atone for this, but I know that I cannot."

Jenny gave him her hand, saying, with her friendly and encouraging voice, —

"If the wronged father has forgiven you, then, my friend, you can also hope to atone for the folly of your youth by your love for the right and for your suffering fellow-beings. Once more I say to you, in work and the effort to serve our kind do we find a remedy for all sufferings. Talk to me about her when memory torments you, but do not abandon yourself to these outbursts of an aimless despair. Think that she" (Jenny pointed to the picture) "from her heaven smiles at you for every good deed you accomplish, and let the man's strength, honor, and virtue atone for the youth's false step."

"Thanks, Jenny! I knew that your voice would sound consoling. Tell me, do you believe that a man who has brought a young and innocent girl to an untimely grave can dare to hope for domestic happiness if his heart should once more awake?"

"I do."

"Would you be able to love such a man?"

"Yes, if his life afterwards gave evidence of a noble effort to make amends for what he had done."

"Thanks! When you, a simple, true, and virtuous girl, can judge me with so much mercy, I shall again begin to hope."

A servant announced that the Fröken was waiting for them.

In a few moments Jenny was sitting at Aunt Sigrid's side.

In the afternoon the Baron drove Jenny home, and they talked the whole way about Alfhilda, the Doctor, and Bergström. Jenny's words were so friendly and cordial that they drove away all gloominess from the Baron's soul.

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One day near the last of July the Majorskan and Jenny sat together under the lindens on the lawn. Jenny regarded her mother attentively. There was an expression of anxiety in the young girl's look, which found its explanation in the Majorskan's somewhat pale and fatigued appearance.

"Do you know, mamma, what I was thinking of?" said Jenny, bending forward towards her mother.

"No, my child!" The Majorskan looked tenderly at her daughter.

"The same as I have said several times. You are ill, my own, darling Malin." With these words Jenny was at her mother's side.

"Strange that you should now think of it. I was just going to tell you that I myself begin to believe what you have twice said, namely, that I am not quite well."

"Mamma, mamma, you see that I was not mistaken. My beloved Malin, tell me, how are you? Speak frankly with me; I know that you will then feel better. Now it is as if fear and anxiety were trying to stifle me." Jenny covered her mother's hand with kisses.

"But you, dear Jenny, will be my

consolation and my strength, will you not?"

"Most assuredly," answered Jenny, whose blooming cheeks had become white as snow.

"Well then, Jenny, I am afraid that I have a cancer." As she uttered this dreaded word she passed her hands caressingly over Jenny's hair. A tear trembled in her eyelashes.

"Mamma!" exclaimed Jenny, with an expression of terrible grief, "and this you have concealed."

If Jenny's life had been at stake, she could not have restrained her tears. She hid her face against her mother's breast and wept. A long pause ensued, during which the mother and daughter held each other in a close embrace. The Majorskan broke it first.

"Now my child, since the first bitter grief has had vent, let us talk calmly. We need both courage and fortitude. I have kept silent, first, because I considered the swelling of no consequence, as it did not trouble me. Afterwards, when it began to pain me, I consulted the doctor; he gave me an emollient, but it did no good."

"Mamma, why did you say nothing to me?" asked Jenny, weeping.

"Ah, my darling, do you not know that Malin is an egotist, and that her happiness consists in seeing her children glad? Should I then, without reason, deprive myself of this happiness, and with my apprehensions blast your joy? No; I thought, if it becomes dangerous, then I will take Jenny into my confidence. Yesterday, while you were gone with papa and your brothers to New-mill, I sent for the doctor and received my doom."

Again there was a pause. Jenny's tears fell abundantly. The Majorskan tried to subdue her emotion. After a long silence she said, —

"Now, Jenny, you must show yourself *strong;* for your courage and calmness are needed for what is to follow, if I shall dare to hope to become well."

Jenny immediately dried her tears, kissed her mother's hand, and pressed it tightly between hers. She was unable to speak.

"The doctor says that I must submit to an operation as soon as possible. Yet he advised me to wait until Doctor Bergström returned from his journey abroad, as he considers him more skilful. Bergström has written to our doctor that he intends to return to Sweden the last of August. Consequently I must go to Stockholm then."

"And I will go with you," said Jenny, in an inarticulate voice.

"Yes, you, my joy and my comfort, shall certainly go with me; but you see, Jenny, papa must not know that I am to undergo any operation. With his violent temper he would stir up heaven and earth, and abandon himself to a despair and anxiety which might become detrimental to his health and also deprive me of the calmness I so much need. Neither do I wish the boys worried by this intelligence; but I would like to have you, Jenny, talk to your father, tell him that I am not very well, and that I ought to take a trip to Stockholm. This will spare him all uneasiness. He has so much trouble any way, that I should really reproach myself if I increased it by my sickness."

"Always the same, always sacrificing yourself for him, you good, you darling Malin! And you, — you are obliged to suffer so much!"

The Majorskan kissed Jenny's brow, saying, —

"God does not impose any greater burden upon us mortals than we are able to bear. Do you see, there comes papa through the gate! He looks so happy and contented. Do not let your sad look disturb his joy."

The next instant the Major seated himself on a rustic chair with the ladies.

"Ah, so you sit here alone and gossip!" said he. "Well then, it happens just right that I am for the moment provided with news."

"What is it?" asked the Majorskan.

"They say that Doctor Bergström will return to Sweden, soon, and thinks of making a visit here. Then Jenny can carry out her intention of getting him for a husband."

"Ah, dear papa, it was you yourself who wished to arrange that matter!" Jenny had with great effort forced a smile, but with indifferent success, — something which the Major did not notice, however.

"As the Doctor is a cousin of Minna's father, he is related to us, and this may facilitate your efforts, my dear Jenny, if you should wish to propose yourself. *Apropos* of Minna, she was a real finished coquette, and as stubborn as Sister Sophie; but I rather guess Sophie will feel it away to her toes, when she learns that Minna is a countess."

"The loss of her husband and Albertine's long illness have probably bent her pride," said the Majorskan.

"Bent Sophie! No, my little woman, such dispositions cannot be bent, they can only be crushed. If I know her rightly, she is just the same as ever."

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Some time elapsed; but Jenny's cheerfulness no longer proceeded from the heart. It is true she jested in her father's presence, and spoke calmly and encouragingly to her mother; but when she was alone, she would sit and stare before her for hours.

The Baron had resumed his visits to Rönby in the evening, but carefully avoided any meeting with Bergström.

The Baron soon perceived that the Majorskan often looked weak and suffering, although she had a friendly smile for all; that Jenny was more silent; and when he observed the young girl's blooming face more closely, he saw that there was a pallor over the roses, and that the eyes revealed a secret sorrow.

One evening when he came to Rönby, — it was the last of July, — he found Jenny sitting alone under the lindens.

The Majorskan had gone to the fields with the Major to witness the mowing and treat the people.

Jenny, who was always accustomed to be present on such occasions, had asked to be allowed to stay at home, and Arvid had gone in her stead.

"I was so sure that you would be down in the hayfield, that I was on the point of riding there directly," said the Baron.

"To-day I was not disposed to go," answered Jenny.

The Baron looked at her and perceived traces of tears.

"Jenny, you have for some time had a secret sorrow on your heart; would you not like to confide it to me?"

"Yes, I have indeed a bitter sorrow, which, like a gnawing worm, consumes me," answered Jenny.

"And in what does it consist?"

"Have you not guessed it?" Jenny looked at him with tearful eyes.

"No, not precisely, but —" The Baron paused. He feared to excite her apprehension about something which had not yet troubled her.

"Speak out; do you find any one else changed?"

"Yes!"

"Mamma, — is it not so?"

"I confess that it seems to me the Majorskan sometimes looks suffering."

Jenny's tears now fell down on her hands, and with an unsteady voice she said, —

"That is the cause of my sorrow. Mamma is ill, dangerously ill; but no one except her and the doctor knows it, or must be allowed to know anything about it. You, Baron Fritz, must forget that

I have told you. O, if you knew what anguish I have been in for the last few weeks! I am not at all strong. I feel that misfortune might crush me, and sometimes I have thought that it exceeded my power to appear cheerful when I felt so unspeakably anxious."

"I have always considered you to possess a high degree of moral courage, a firm trust in God."

"And so I have. If the affliction had befallen me, I would have borne it without murmuring; but now it is my mother, this kind, tender, and exemplary mother, whom I shall see suffer and perhaps — die. To suffer through those we love is ten times worse than to suffer ourselves."

"But, Jenny, is there then no cure for this illness?"

"Yes. But for that it is necessary for mamma to go to Stockholm without papa's suspecting the reason. With his anxiety and his violent grief he would only make the issue of — of — the operation doubtful."

"I will endeavor to aid you in this respect; but you must promise me to look towards the future with more trust."

"I will try to."

When the Major came home, the Baron began to say that Jenny did not look well, that her disposition was changed, and suggested to the Major that his wife and Jenny ought to take a little trip during that beautiful season of the year. "I intend to go to Stockholm next month. What if I should put my carriage and myself at the disposal of the ladies?"

"Are you crazy, Baron?" exclaimed the Major. "What the deuce would they do in Stockholm? people are not likely to get their health back there?"

"But physicians are there, and the Fröken really looks ill."

The Major began to laugh, and did *not wish to hear* a word more about the matter. Still, Jenny had now got a thread which she intended to spin out.

A day or two afterwards, quite early in the morning, she stood in the entry with her hat in her hand, waiting for the Major to come out. At last the saloon door opened.

"What are you standing here for?" asked the father, patting her on the shoulder.

"I was waiting for you to keep me company."

"Well, that was not so bad. Forward, march, then! we will go to Tomteboda."

Jenny took her father's arm.

She now put her little head on one side, and spoke of how pleasant it would be to go to Stockholm, how much mamma needed such a recreation, and how good papa would be if he said yes. Finally she obtained his consent; her mother and she should be allowed to go, but they were not to remain away longer than a fortnight.

With a considerably lighter heart Jenny returned home. She wrote immediately to Minna at Dörby, and informed her that they intended to go to the capital about the middle of August.

That evening, when the Baron came over to Rönby, the Major said to him laughingly, —

"You are a fine neighbor, Baron, to come and give my women crazy ideas, so that I could not get rid of that girl until I gave my consent for the journey to the city."

"All right! I promise that you shall be right well pleased at having consented."

"Fiddlesticks! I bid fair to have an infernally lonesome time here."

By the next post Jenny received an answer from Minna, saying that she would be there to meet them, and that they must not stay anywhere but at the Count's house on Garden Street.

The last of August, a few days after Doctor Bergström's return to Sweden, his servant announced that two ladies wished to see him.

When Richard stepped out into the saloon, an exclamation of surprise escaped him, and he hastened towards the older lady, whom he greeted with a respectful bow and these words, —

"How happy I feel once more to be allowed to pay my regards to the noblest woman I know; I regret, however, that it must occur here, for I understand that the pleasure of seeing my gracious aunt — I may as a relative call you so — belongs to the physician, not the friend."

"It concerns both the physician and the friend," said the Majorskan with her charming smile, and gave him her hand. "You undoubtedly recollect, dear Richard, that I once offered you my friendship."

"That moment is ineffaceably printed on my memory, and I shall never forget the kindness and magnanimity with which you treated me, although I was only a stranger."

"Ah! let us not speak of that which is not worth while to expend our words upon. Do not misunderstand me; when I remind you of the old friendship, it is only because I now come to call it in requisition."

"The Fröken is well, I hope," said the Doctor, greeting Jenny.

"Perfectly."

"My eyes have already told me that it is you, aunt, who need my advice."

"They have not deceived you; it is really I."

"May I ask you to walk in here?"

The Doctor showed the Majorskan into the library, and Jenny remained in the saloon. She sank down on a sofa, and sat there motionless as a statue, without daring to breathe. The minutes seemed like centuries. While she abandoned herself to all her painful feelings, the saloon door opened, and the Doctor's servant said to a man who stepped in, —

"Wait here until the Doctor comes out."

The stranger remained standing awhile, but as it seemed to him that there was too long a delay, he turned to Jenny with the words, —

"Perhaps the Doctor cannot be seen?"

"He will come directly."

"I hope it may not be long."

"If it is any one who is very ill, I will inform the Doctor."

"I do not know, but the Fröken told me to come soon with an answer. Her Grace seems to be seriously ill, although no one wishes to speak of it. It was just so when the Professor died last spring."

"Whom do you refer to?" asked Jenny.

"Professorskan von Krug."

At this moment the Majorskan and the Doctor entered. He went to Jenny, saying with hearty sympathy, —

"We can with perfect security hope for a good result. The chief thing is to keep the Majorskan in a calm and cheerful state of mind; and I know that you are better able to do this than any one else. You are my assistant, and I count a good deal upon you."

"To get mamma well, I believe I could perform impossibilities," replied Jenny.

"I was to leave this here, from Fröken von Krug," interrupted the man.

The Majorskan and the Doctor turned towards him.

"Is any one sick at the Professorskan's?" inquired the Majorskan, who saw the Doctor turn pale.

"Yes; her Grace," was the answer.

The color returned to the Doctor's cheeks; the ladies took leave, and he parted from them with the words, —

"To-morrow I shall have the honor of calling on you, aunt."

The Majorskan drove to her sister-in-law's, but only saw Albertine, who was exceedingly glad to see her relatives.

She told them that her mother was sick, but without alleging what the complaint was.

We return to the Doctor.

When the Majorskan and Jenny were gone, he went into the library to open the letter; it contained: —

"You are again here! I thank God for it. Come immediately, my mother is blind. My only hope is in you. Doctor A—— gives you his entire confidence; but my mother would probably rather drag out her life in blindness than regain her sight through you; therefore you must pass for another physician. This is Doctor A——'s plan. Not for a moment do I doubt how you will act. I know that you will restore her sight, although she has stubbornly refused to consent to your happiness.

"Thy ALBERTINE."

"Yes, by my honor, if it stands in human power I will do it, thou proud, unbending woman, who would prefer eternal darkness to being cured by me! But you shall nevertheless become my debtor without ever knowing it."

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In Count Stormhjelm's abode two rooms had been given up to the Majorskan. The Countess, the Count, and all the servants competed to show the welcome guests all conceivable attention. Minna was towards her relatives the grateful and friendly young woman; towards her husband the coquettish, capricious, and domineering one, who completely subdued him.

The Doctor went to see the Majorskan the day after her visit to him. Before seeing her he asked to see Jenny.

"Now, Jenny, I come to put your courage to the proof," said he. "To-morrow the operation is to take place; at ten o'clock Doctor —— and I will be here. You must try to keep the Majorskan in good spirits, and make the intervening time for her as short as possible, so that she may not dwell upon the suffering which is before her."

"I will try," said Jenny, deadly pale.

"But, for God's sake, not with so anxious an appearance."

"Be calm, Richard, you shall be satisfied."

And the Doctor was satisfied. With an unexampled courage and a fortitude which excited his admiration, Jenny remained during those moments of unspeakable anguish at her mother's side. She did not leave her for an instant, yet it was not a mute and lifeless image, but a daughter, tender and loving, who with her presence and cheering words tried to mitigate the pain. Jenny knew that her presence was a comfort to her mother, and therefore she subjected herself to all the torture which filled her heart during the operation.

The Majorskan, capable herself of every sacrifice of her own feelings, when it concerned those she loved, had presented this image of devotion and self-abnegation, which, as it were, belongs to woman alone, and her example had developed in the daughter the same sublime strength which distinguished the mother.

When it was all over, and the Majorskan had fallen into a trance-like sleep from the effect of an opiate, the Doctor seized Jenny's hand, saying in a low voice, —

"Come with me; the nurse will let us know if aunt awakes."

Jenny followed him mechanically. When they reached the outer room, the Doctor said, —

"I must open one of your veins, Jenny."

Jenny pushed up her sleeve. She had such a pressure in her breast that it seemed to her as though she would suffocate; speak she could not.

After she was bled she breathed freer, and a flood of tears came to relieve her overcharged heart. Two days after the operation Arvid presented himself; he had accompanied his mother and sister from Rönby, without any suspicion of the true reason of their journey. Jenny went to meet him, saying, —

"You cannot see mamma to-day, Arvid."

"Is she out?"

"Come and sit down by me, and I will tell you how it is."

"Jenny, you frighten me. What has happened? You are so pale!" exclaimed Arvid.

"Do you not see that I am calm? Well then, my brother, what I, a weak girl, can bear, you, a strong youth, ought certainly to be able to bear with fortitude. Do you promise it?"

Jenny smiled so kindly, so encouragingly at her brother.

"My good sister, how much you are like mother!" said Arvid, pressing her hand. "Speak; I promise to listen to you with calmness."

"Mamma is ill, and you cannot see her for a week."

"Jenny!" exclaimed Arvid, pale as ashes. "For God's sake tell me, is she dangerously ill? Ah, I see by your white face and the tears in your dim eyes that something terrible has happened. Speak frankly, if you hold me dear!"

Arvid looked at his sister full of anguish.

"You shall know all, my poor brother."

"The worst is now over, and the Doctor says that we have every reason to hope. Mamma came here to undergo an operation. This took place two days ago — Do not become so pale, dear Arvid; mamma will get well again."

"Jenny, may I not see her?" sobbed Arvid, who, in spite of his cadet uniform, could not keep from weeping like a child.

"No, Arvid, no one must go in but the nurse, the doctor, and me."

"Let me only see her through the door; that will calm and console me," entreated Arvid, trying to restrain his tears.

"But promise to be perfectly quiet, so that she will not perceive you."

"I promise."

Jenny went before, Arvid followed her, but his steps were unsteady. Jenny lifted the curtains of the door a little, and then Arvid saw his mother lying pale, with a suffering appearance, but perfectly calm.

The tall youth bent his knee on the threshold of his mother's room, and from the depths of his heart arose a warm and fervent prayer for this loving and adored mother, whom he was not allowed to approach.

After the lapse of a week he received permission from the Doctor to visit her.

Jenny had fulfilled her office of nurse in her own charming manner. Was her mother sad, then Jenny smiled and jested; did she suffer, then she inspired her with trust and courage. Always pleasant, always cheerful, she hovered around the Majorskan like a good spirit, read to her, spoke of the future, and painted it so bright and clear. Jenny did not sit night and day by her bed. No, she rested when her mother slept. In consequence of this the Majorskan always saw her daughter fresh and blooming, full of hope and trust; and it was just this which hastened the healing of the wound, and aided the efforts of the physicians.

The one who tried with true friendship and indefatigable sympathy to fulfil Jenny's slightest wish was the Baron. His kindness and cordiality during this time of trial made a deep impression upon her. All his delicate efforts to mitigate the sadness and dispel the gloom of this period for Jenny were ineffaceably engraved in her memory.

When the ninth day after the operation was passed, Jenny wrote to her father and told him all, adding the joyful and comforting intelligence that his Malin was entirely out of danger. Jenny knew her father, and felt sure that as soon as he received this letter, he would immediately start for the capital, to convince himself that his wife really lived.

Jenny was not mistaken. A few days afterwards her father stood before her.

"Child, how is it with your mother?" asked he, in a smothered voice.

"If you promise to be calm and quiet as a lamb, you may see her," answered Jenny, throwing herself in her father's arms. "God be praised, papa, that we can see each other again without grief and sorrow," whispered she, weeping. "You can't imagine what a season of anguish it has been for your Jenny."

A few minutes later the Majorskan's head rested on her husband's loudly beating heart. They were both too agitated to speak. Some weeks afterwards, one clear and beautiful October day, the Major took his wife home, well and cheerful.

The rejoicing which then ensued can be more easily imagined than described.

To the old man Bergström the Major said, "Your son has saved the dearest I possess, and this I shall never forget. Would to God that I could have an opportunity of showing my gratitude!"

"He has only fulfilled a sacred duty," said the old man, with Spartan calmness.

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A different drama was enacted in the Professorskan's house.

In her room on a sofa sat the Professorskan stiff and straight, with her hard, unbending expression; but the clear sharp eyes were now dull and dim. At the first glance one saw that she was blind.

On a stool, close beside her, Albertine sat in silence; but the young girl occasionally turned her eyes to her mother, and then there was compassion, but not love, in her glance.

"Are you sure that no one suspects what sort of an illness binds me to my room?" said the Professorskan.

"Perfectly sure, mamma. None save Martha and Doctor A—— know of mamma's misfortune."

"Already two too many, but it could not be helped. Well, what did the doctor say the last time he was here?"

"That he would bring that oculist with him to-day."

"Who will bind himself to preserve my secret?"

"Yes."

A pause ensued, only broken by the slight sound which Albertine's needle occasioned.

"What time is it?" inquired the Professorskan.

"Eleven."

"Has Albert been here?"

"No."

"Does he know of this?"

"You have forbidden me, mamma, to tell him a word about it."

Again there was a pause, which was interrupted by Martha's entrance.

"Doctor A—— and another physician are down stairs."

"Go and receive them!" ordered her Grace.

Albertine did as she was bid. In a few minutes she came back with two physicians. Doctor A—— went first, and after him came Richard and Albertine. The young Doctor held her hand in his, and regarded her beautiful, pale face with an expression of tenderness, which called forth a whole heaven of love in Albertine's eyes.

With a motion Doctor A—— dismissed Martha.

"How does your Grace do to-day?" asked he.

"Very well."

"I have here a distinguished oculist, Doctor Berg." (The "ström" was left out.)

Her Grace made a stiff inclination of her head. Then followed a consultation, which ended in Richard's declaring that he considered himself able to operate upon her Grace with success. The physicians soon took their departure, and after Albertine had exchanged a few words of love and hope with Richard, she returned, sighing, to her place beside her mother.

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The November sun shone pale and faint upon the streets of Stockholm.

In a room, the double curtains of which were dropped, sat the Professorskan with a bandage over her eyes. She was conversing with Doctor A——.

"So your Grace is perfectly satisfied with the young physician who has attended you and performed the operation?"

"Perfectly. I consider that I stand in great debt to him."

"A debt which cannot so easily be paid, as one can scarcely encounter a greater misfortune than to be blind."

"True."

"To-day I shall take off the bandage."

"You? Why not he?"

"I do not know; he has commissioned me to do it."

"But I—I desire that Doctor *Bergström* may do it himself," said her Grace, with a firm voice.

"Ah, your Grace has found out our secret!"

"Yes."

"But remember that strong emotions are dangerous."

"Herr Doctor, I desire Doctor Bergström himself to take off the bandage; leave the rest to me."

In a few seconds Richard entered.

"Her Grace wishes you to take off the bandage yourself."

Without saying a word Richard went to the window, drew back the inner curtains, and then removed the bandage.

Her Grace put her hands to her eyes as if blinded by the faint light that entered, but let them fall again, and looked at Richard who stood before her with the bandage in his hand.

"Can your Grace see?" asked he in a calm voice.

"Perfectly well: as well as before I became blind." Her Grace rose with her usual proud bearing, and took a step, saying, —

"I thank you, sir, you have given me back my sight."

"It was my duty when I was called by my colleague, and I am fully rewarded for my pains in having succeeded." The Doctor bowed without taking the proffered hand.

"The only thing I now have to say, before I leave your Grace entirely to Doctor A——'s care, is that you must accustom your eyes gradually to full daylight."

"Then you cease to attend me?"

"I am no longer needed, and must therefore excuse myself." With these words Richard took leave, without her Grace saying a word to detain him, or adding any further expression of gratitude.

In the saloon sat Albertine, waiting for the result, when the Doctor again entered.

"Well," said she.

"She is now, as ever, cold, proud, and unbending; but, believe, me she will one day give me your hand."

"I too hope it. I know my mother; she would not be willing to stand in debt to any one as she now does to you."

"And always will; for how could she ever recompense me for the bitter conflicts and unspeakable anguish her pride has cost me?"

"She cannot, but I can," whispered Albertine, smiling.

Minna's entrance interrupted the conversation.

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Things had again resumed their regular course in the Professorskan's house. Not a word had her Grace uttered to Albertine about Richard. She retained the same proud and commanding manner.

A few days before Christmas the Professorskan sent her servant with a note to Richard. When the messenger returned with the answer that the Doctor would come in the afternoon, the Professorskan gave her daughter permission to accept the invitation Countess Stormhjelm had given Albertine to go with her to the opera. The Countess's carriage stopped for Albertine before five o'clock, so that her Grace found herself alone at home. About six the Doctor arrived.

Her Grace sat in a cabinet just as when she sent for him the first time; and no feature in her face indicated a milder state of mind.

The Doctor entered, and she treated him with the same cold bend of the head; the only difference in her manner was that she invited him with her hand to take a seat in an easy-chair.

"Herr Doctor, you have probably expected that I would remember my indebtedness to you."

"Madam, I had already ceased to expect."

"But still you did expect?"

"Yes."

"And you have found me unpardonably forgetful?"

"It is you, madam, who say so."

"You have considered me to stand in so great a debt to you, that I ought not to forget to discharge it."

"There are debts which cannot be discharged."

"And you count mine to you among them."

"Yes, madam."

"Ah, sir, you are always the same proud man; you do not swerve a hair's-breadth from the way you have marked out."

"And you are just the same. Trials and misfortunes cannot bend you."

A pause ensued. Her Grace broke it, —

"Before we make up our accounts, I desire to know how you became my physician?"

"Your daughter called me to help *her mother;* at that moment you were to me only *the mother of the woman I adored.* My duty and my heart commanded me to become your benefactor."

"And also the desire to make this proud and haughty woman your debtor, to force from her a gratitude which would bring you nearer to the daughter."

"No, madam, not *your* gratitude did I strive for, but the inner consciousness of doing right, that I might say to myself, 'This woman who has never seen from me any dishonorable action, who has been forced to respect me in spite of her prejudices, who has wounded and humiliated me, who has occasioned me all possible anguish, and who in defiance of her departed husband's will refuses me her daughter's hand, to her will I restore sight, without her knowing that she has received this gift from me.' This I hope was a revenge fully worthy of me. I did not wish you to consider yourself my debtor; I wished to keep this consciousness to myself. It was not my fault that you discovered my secret, and the very moment I learned that you knew the true condition, I drew back."

"I believe you. Just your care to conceal yourself induced me to listen attentively to the sound of your voice, and I recognized this voice, which has spoken so friendly to me."

"And then, madam, you wished to let me experience that you never would receive anything from me without repaying it?"

"True; but you have said, 'There are certain debts which cannot be paid.' Is there, then, nothing with which I can requite you for your trouble? Have you no price for your operations?"

"Madam, no sum, not even a prince's

fortune would have induced me to restore *your* sight. *You* could never become a patient from whom *I* would receive remuneration. I did not sell my skill to you; I gave you the results of it."

The Professorskan's cheeks became crimson as she replied in a haughty tone, —

"But I should have possessed the right to send the fee for your services to you, as to Doctor A——."

"Certainly; but your Grace knew that I would have sent it back."

"Well, then, is there *nothing else* that you wish to ask of me as a recompense?"

"Once, if I am not mistaken, I petitioned your Grace, but I then received a refusal, and now I can ask nothing from you."

"Not even the hand of the girl you love, *whose mother* you have helped?"

"Her hand I have once asked; I cannot ask it again."

"Ah, sir, you wish to humiliate me!" exclaimed her Grace, proudly.

"Not at all; on the contrary, I afford you an opportunity to bestow what I can no longer request."

"Suppose I said, 'Here, sir, is my daughter's hand; this is the only way in which I can manifest my gratitude,' would you then not find the reward worthy of a sacrifice?"

"Madam, your daughter's hand belongs to me, her father's wish has destined it for me; it is not that you shall give me."

"What, then, if I may ask?"

"Only your blessing to our union."

"Well, then, as you dispute my right to give that which already belongs to you, do you consider my blessing worth any sacrifice?"

"Any blessing that is bestowed ought to proceed from the heart, from the conviction that the thing or the person one blesses deserves it. Consequently it cannot be purchased, neither with sacrifices nor anything else. If it is to have any value, any significance, it must be given without conditions."

"Sir, you demand a good deal when you wish me to yield to you so entirely."

"I demand nothing, ask nothing, have not expressed any wish. Your Grace has sent for me and I have come. I will leave."

"And I should remain your debtor until my death!" exclaimed her Grace, proudly. "You do not know Sophie von Krug, if you think that she will live with the consciousness of being indebted to any one, without trying to make a return."

"This is a matter which concerns your Grace alone; I have no right to express myself about it."

A pause again ensued, which was once more broken by her Grace.

"The only hinderance," she began, "to your union with my daughter is — *your father*. To you I render my full respect, but it would deeply mortify me to be obliged to acknowledge relationship with a man who has been nothing but my upper servant. I demand as a condition for my consent that you persuade him to leave the city, and that he does not take any part in the wedding."

Now it was the Doctor's turn to raise his head with pride. He gave the Professorskan a stern look.

"Madam, your words have made my blood boil, and that I still keep my seat is only because I love your daughter more than all else, and have repeated to myself that you are her mother. You are proud of your nobility. I am proud of *my father*, — the simple workingman. You do not wish to be related to him, — you are so already. Your niece has called him her relative, and at present he is staying with your brother. The mate he refuses to bless I cannot accept as mine, and I will not go before the altar and swear eternal fidelity to Albertine, unless my father conducts me there. What I am is his work, and should I

in the days of prosperity forget it, then, madam, I deserve to have you withdraw your respect and never give your blessing to your daughter's union with me. I should be an *ungrateful wretch, a miserable upstart,* if I blushed for my origin. I hope you do not regard me as such a man; I thought I had inspired you with a better opinion of me."

"Your father, then, must conduct you to the altar? Ah, sir, you require altogether too much in wishing to have all possible concessions, but to make none yourself."

"Madam, the happiness I expect to receive from your hand ought to be given me; but never shall I traffic with my duty to attain it. I have had respect for your rights as a mother, I have revered them so highly that I did not wish to gain my happiness at their expense; and now, madam, I hope that you in your turn will show the same respect for my duty as a son."

"But if I consider myself unable to grant you my daughter's hand, after such a declaration?"

"Then I will take my leave and — wait."

The Doctor rose as if to let the act follow the word.

"And leave me eternally indebted to you?"

"That is your fault, madam, not mine."

"You give me no choice!" Her Grace rose too, and extended her hand to the Doctor with an obliging smile. "You have conquered me, and I am too proud not to acknowledge that you have done it with noble weapons. I give you my daughter's hand and my blessing, as a slight tribute of my respect for you?"

The Doctor seized the Professorskan's hand and raised it to his lips with the words, —

"I was convinced that so proud a soul would also be noble."

"*One single* condition I add," said her Grace, "that my daughter must know nothing of this conversation of ours, or of its result, until Christmas eve, when the betrothal takes place. I owe her a recompense for the time she has so faithfully taken care of me, even if her care has only proceeded from a cold sense of duty."

"You shall be obeyed."

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Two days before Christmas Count Stormhjelm entered his wife's room.

"Here is an invitation from my aunt, Countess H——, for us to spend Christmas eve with her," said the Count, handing her a letter. "I hope you accept the invitation."

"Impossible; I have already promised myself and you to my aunt, the Professorskan," answered Minna.

"Ah, indeed! but I regret that we cannot this time fulfil your promise, as I do not intend to offend Countess H——," replied the Count, haughtily.

"Be so good, dear Erik, as to speak only for yourself. You may go wherever you please, I am not at all anxious about your company. As far as I am concerned, I shall go to Albertine's."

"You will, then, always be against everything that I wish, but I must tell you plainly that I am tired and sick of that eternal foolishness with Albertine. Upon her you lavish all your time and all your caresses; and one might really believe that you could not live a day without seeing her. This must have an end, and I should think that your husband also had some rights over you. It looks, by my honor, as if you were married to Albertine, and I only existed to obey your caprices."

"So we are again to have a scene? Do you know, Erik, what I think? That this has begun to be monotonous. Then in God's name hit upon something else, and do not constantly come back with

one and the same thing; for the result will be that I must repeat what I have a thousand times said, namely, that I married simply and solely to be near Albertine. With regard to my caprices, who asks you to gratify them? Not I, at least."

"Not you! Is there then a single example of your doing as I ask you?"

"No; I act according to my own will, and desire that you may do the same."

"Well, then, it is my wish that we go to Countess H——'s."

"Ah, my friend, you always commit the grammatical error of speaking in the plural, when you ought to confine yourself to the first person singular; for instance, you ought to say, I will go to Countess H——'s, and then I would answer, Do as you please, my dear, I, on the contrary, will go to Albertine's."

"And this you consider acting according to my own will, when I am obliged to limit this will to what concerns me alone."

"Ah, you are too silly, when you talk so! Do you then think that any one has the right to force another person? Not at all. The fault with you is that you wish to govern others, and the result is that others govern you. Please ring; I wish to go out."

"Do you know, Minna, it sometimes seems to me that my life resembles a hell?"

"If so, it is because you are not fitted for the heavenly kingdom. Will you ring?"

"Demon!" muttered the Count.

Minna went to him, laid her hand on his arm, and looked at him with a fascinating smile.

"Do I look like a demon?"

The Count seized her round the waist, and said beseechingly, —

"Minna, do as I wish for once! go with me to Countess H——'s."

"Erik, go with me to Albertine's." Minna's dark eyes looked so dangerous that they seemed especially created to conquer a man's heart; the Count accordingly pressed her passionately to his, whispering, —

"I will go with you"; but scarcely were the words uttered, when Minna slipped from his embrace, kissed her hand, and disappeared in a cabinet, before the infatuated husband had time even to imprint a kiss on her lips.

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Christmas eve came. Directly after dinner, her Grace said to Albertine, —

"As you know, I have invited a few relatives here this evening. They are coming to tea, and I wish to see you well dressed."

Albertine approached the door to go, but stopped and turned to her mother with the words, —

"Is Albert to be here?"

The Professorskan compressed her lips and looked sharply at her daughter.

"Perhaps you expect me to invite that refractory son to celebrate Christmas with me. No! may he first come and ask forgiveness for his fault."

"But, mamma —"

"I will hear nothing; go and dress yourself."

"Allow me to say only a word." Albertine went towards her mother with a noble bearing and an expression of deep emotion in her face.

"I have promised myself, or rather a person whom I place higher than myself, never to be guilty of any false or deceitful action; therefore I desire to tell you that I have embroidered a mat which I think of giving *my betrothed* for Christmas."

"Your betrothed? I did not know that my daughter was betrothed. I have not given your hand to any one."

"But I have done so, and my father has confirmed my choice. I regard myself therefore as Richard Bergström's

betrothed. Mamma, I have kept silent ever since my father died, I have remained passive outwardly, because I expected that my mother would remember what she owed the departed, her daughter, and her physician; but now, as weeks and months have gone by without a word or gesture indicating that you intend to fulfil my father's wishes, I consider it time to speak."

"Probably to prescribe laws to *your mother*; but you are mistaken, she prescribes such herself."

"Not that tone, mother!" Albertine took a step nearer. "Look at me, and say what has become of your blooming daughter. A pale shadow, who with weary and comfortless looks regards the life she drags out, without hope of happiness, without faith in the future. What have I to hope for, when my mother's pride comes between me and the man I love? What remains to me? To die. Ah, my mother," continued Albertine, with emotion, "for once I must utter all the thoughts and feelings my soul contains, so that you may clearly understand what I am through the man I love, what I might have been through him if he had had a less noble character, and where your education could have led me. That I now stand here, humble, unhappy, but submissive to your will, is his work, for he once said, "*Only one who has been a dutiful and affectionate daughter can become a good and noble wife.*" I wished to become worthy of him, and I have been a submissive daughter, but my tortured, oppressed heart would not love you as it ought. I gave him all the love I had. For him I could have sacrificed everything, and if he had so demanded, nay, only desired, your daughter would have left her home, to which no tie of affection bound her, and followed him. When I did so, when I fled to him in despair, he brought me back to the home I had *abandoned,* and he taught me, '*That a woman who does not value her own honor has no respect for the man she loves.*" He gave me a protector in my father. Ah, mother! that I to-day can look at you without blushing is the result of his teachings, not yours; for you gave me no support in the moment of temptation. No love, no confidence, existed between your daughter and you. Cold and chilling was the atmosphere around me, and I often saw with envy a mother caress her children, while these expressions of tenderness in other mothers imbittered me against my own. Your sternness had left all nobler instincts slumbering in my breast, and I resembled a vessel without a rudder, and driven recklessly before the wind. If I had been swallowed up in the waves of passion, it would have been a result of the harshness and severity with which you have treated me from childhood. No fruits grow in the winter; none of the tenderer and higher feelings are developed without the sunshine of love. Richard became the life power which caused my better inclinations to bud, to bear fruit, and yet — yet — you lay your cold hard hand between our hearts." Albertine added in tears: "O, be a mother for once, let your heart speak, and do not suffer your lonely daughter to beg in vain for her happiness and go away unheard! Does she not deserve to taste felicity,—she who has dragged out a cold and solitary childhood, a bitter and sorrowful youth? It is my life I ask of you; for this hopelessness will kill me!"

Albertine had fallen on her knees. She ceased. Silent and motionless, but pale, the Professorskan stood before her. After a long pause she answered, —

"Rise, and believe once for all that your mother knows what is her duty and that she acts in accordance with it. There has been much in what you have said that ought to have excited my anger; but I know that I have acted right, and in the consciousness of this I

take no notice of your words. Rise, go and dress yourself; I now wish to be obeyed."

The Professorskan drew away her hand and left the room.

Albertine remained on her knees; some bitter tears ran down her cheeks, and she murmured, —

"Heart of stone, without compassion, without love, what have I to hope!" She rose to her feet and threw her head back with a resolute motion.

"Well then, you will not, — you push me away; I will once more fly to him, and tell him what I have told you."

With this she went up to her room. Before she was dressed the Professorskan sent up Martha with the order that the Fröken should hurry, as her mother had something to say to her. Martha assisted her so that she could be ready quickly.

When Albertine entered the parlor, she found her mother on the sofa, and before her, with his back turned to the door, stood a tall slender man. Albertine's heart trembled; she stopped on the threshold, for she believed herself the victim of an illusion. Was it not Richard's figure, or could there actually be two persons with forms so alike?

"Come nearer, Albertine," said her mother when she saw her; just then *he* turned round, and the next instant Albertine felt herself clasped to Richard's beating heart.

In a voice trembling with emotion and happiness, she said, —

"You are now *mine*, — mine before God and the whole world."

"And your mother has, I hope, fulfilled her duty, without needing to be exhorted to it by you, which is proven by this," said the Professorskan, handing her daughter a plain gold ring on which was Albertine's name and the date. "Give it to Richard, with my sanction to your union."

"O my mother, so much goodness!" exclaimed Albertine.

"I have only fulfilled my duty, and now, my son-in-law, place the betrothal ring on the finger of your *fiancée*. I hear the Countess's voice."

The Professorskan laid Albertine's hand in the Doctor's, and added, with a certain solemnity in her voice, —

"God bless you!"

The next moment Count and Countess Stormhjelm entered, and the Professorskan greeted them with all her usual stiffness, after which she presented the Doctor with the words, —

"My daughter's betrothed."

Minna clasped Albertine in her arms, laughing and weeping by turns; the Count, with a slight color, bowed to the betrothed pair, and Minna whispered to the Doctor, —

"Herr Magician, make her as happy as she deserves and I desire."

Further on in the evening, after the rest of the company, consisting only of relatives, were assembled, Martha appeared at the door and made a sign to Albertine. When Albertine stepped out into the saloon, Albert stood there pale, proud, and cold."

"Albert!" she exclaimed, "have you come? Ah, you have done right!"

"Right, no; but Richard forced me to come, and here I am. Perhaps you and he wish me to beg my mother's forgiveness before all these people for the insult *she* has given the woman I love."

"No apologies are needed here; she, like you, is altogether too proud to wish to initiate others into the disputes which separate you, but your absence would have hurt my feelings and offended her."

"Well, now I am here in the capacity of your guardian. What is *right* I am willing to do, but nothing besides. It would be wrong for the brother to be missing at his sister's betrothal, even if a rupture has taken place between mother and son."

Without listening to anything further from Albertine, Albert entered the bril-

liantly lighted parlor. At the sight of him the Professorskan changed color, but responded to his greeting in her peculiar measured way. Albert inquired about her health, and she replied; after that no word was exchanged between them.

The health of the betrothed pair was proposed by Albert. After it was drunk, the Count approached Albertine, with the words, —

"When happiness smiles upon us mortals, we are generally inclined to share it with our fellow-beings. Do you, my cousin, wish to grant me a feeling of compassion?"

"In what respect? You are young, rich, and married to a charming woman, whom you love; what can you lack?"

"Happiness!"

"It is not all who can bear it," answered a merry voice behind them, "and you, my dear, are one of those of whom it may be said that a happy love would spoil them; in the sunshine of bliss they would ripen too soon. But the unhappy are — eternally faithful."

"And on that ground she dooms me to the torments of Tantalus. Be my intercessor with one who ought to love me, but loves only you. That would be a revenge worthy of you, to confer happiness upon the man who once tried to destroy yours."

"If it stands in my power," replied Albertine, with a bright smile, "I will gladly take my revenge in this way."

"And I should thus become miserable!" exclaimed Minna, laughing. "No, I do not agree to that." She smiled coquettishly, and left them.

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We will now go back a little in time, as we must transfer ourselves to Rönby.

It is the week before Christmas. Great preparations have been made. The Major had this year gone for his sons himself, and they were now expected home. The Majorskan and Jenny had finished their large baking and fixed up a little, so as to spend the evening with their loved ones. In the saloon burned a clear and blazing fire, and on the tea-table were two lighted candles. Jenny sat on a stool by the fireplace, with her head leaning on her hand, and gazed thoughtfully into the fire.

The Majorskan had seated herself on the sofa, and was knitting silently on a stocking.

"Do you not think, Malin lilla," began Jenny, "that Fritz of Stjernebro is very much changed?"

"No, it does not seem so to me. Ah, Jenny, I have had a deep regard for him ever since our Stockholm journey. How unwearied he was, how kind and attentive!"

"Yes; and how much of a stranger he is now! Formerly he was here almost every day, and now —"

"He is so occupied with Delby, which he has purchased and thinks of annexing to Stjernebro."

"Perhaps also with the young widow, Baroness A——, who has sold Delby and is to remain there till spring."

"She is a lovely woman; in every respect it would be a suitable match for our Baron."

"Match, mamma!" Jenny looked up at her mother. "Is Silfverkrona going to marry?"

"Well, my dear Jenny," said the Majorskan, laughing; "he certainly has the right to."

"Scarcely," replied Jenny, smiling; and, rising from her place, she went to seat herself by her mother. "I believe I should forbid the banns."

"On what ground?"

"That he last year at this time proposed to me," said Jenny, laughing.

"An interdict which is not valid because you then gave him a refusal."

"Yes, alas! that is true," sighed Jen-

ny, with an expression between jest and earnest.

"I think you said 'Alas'?"

"Yes, certainly, for this year I have nothing at all against becoming a countess."

"Jenny!" The Majorskan regarded her daughter.

"Ah, do not look so amazed!" said Jemmy, throwing her arms around her mother's waist. "You must know, Malin lilla, that it is a very dangerous thing to choose for a friend a young man whom one has known from childhood, and who is a near neighbor into the bargain; for it so easily happens that the calm and sober friendship takes to flight, and —"

"Love assumes the vacant place."

"Precisely. So, for example, it happened that one fine day on our return from Stockholm I caught myself being — jealous of all whom Fritz talked with, and when I then tried to analyze my feelings, I made the discovery —"

"That your feeling for the Baron had changed, since he told you of his fancy for Alfhilda and let you see that his heart which you considered so lukewarm, so indifferent, and so incapable of feeling deeply, could love with such strength and ardor. He acquired quite a different value in your eyes, and it was no longer the pleasant friend, but the deeply loving young man whom you became attached to."

"Yes, Malin, beloved Malin, you are right; your Jenny is actually in love; and therefore —"

"She worries because Fritz goes to Delby so often."

"Yes! it is astonishing how things go in this world. Ever since the moment he let me know the cause of his change, he was again the former Fritz, and my heart beats now as loudly at his coming as when I was fourteen. Last year he asked me to share life's joys and sorrows with him; we spoke of it calmly, seriously, and cheerfully, without my heart beating any quicker. And this year —"

Jenny was here interrupted. The door opened, and the elder Bergström walked in.

"It was real good of you, uncle," exclaimed Jenny, springing towards him, "to come here so early and not sit down there alone, the whole evening. Now come and sit by the fire, and I will play checkers with you until papa arrives." Jenny patted and caressed the old man as if she had been his daughter.

"Jenny spoils me, cousin," said Bergström, "and it becomes so desolate down there in my room, for I long to be here. Just so would Alfhilda have caressed me, if she had lived."

"Most assuredly, with the difference that Alfhilda would have been beautiful and Jenny is ugly."

"How you talk, child! Are you ugly?"

"Something like it, but I am happy nevertheless, and if fortune does not give me a husband, I intend to keep school and not mourn myself to death."

While Jenny was chatting, she had drawn the chess-table forward. The Majorskan went into the kitchen.

"Certainly you will marry, dear child," replied Bergström; "I have never been able to endure old unmarried women. They are at odds with the whole world: with the married because they have become married, with the unmarried because they remind them of their state of single blessedness, with men because they did not wish to have them, and with young girls because they still have the hope of getting married. No, my girl, you must certainly marry!"

"But if no one will have me?"

"Ah, such a fear the Fröken can never entertain!" said a voice behind Jenny, who turned round and exclaimed, blushing, —

"Ah, there is the Baron!"

Bergström also turned round, and when the Baron made a low bow to him

he offered the young nobleman his hand, with the words, —

"It is a subject of general regret, Herr Baron, that you have visited Rönby so seldom of late. Could it be I who frighten you away?"

"I wish," answered the Baron, with an expression full of nobleness, "that the sight of me did not call forth any bitter memories; but when I realize all the pain I must excite, it is my duty to tear open the old wounds as little as possible."

"Over the wounds grow scars, and scars only show where the wounds have been, Herr Baron. Let us both forget the time when you gave and I received these wounds. Come to Rönby just as you used to; otherwise old Bergström will be doomed to leave this home, where he thrives so well, and where he has forgotten the loss he suffered."

With this he pressed the Baron's hand. The shadow of grief which had overspread the Baron's brow was dispelled, and he returned the pressure with equal warmth.

All further conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the Major and his two sons.

There was now a merry hum of voices around the tea-table, where the Majorskan sat so happy between her two sons. After the Major had replied to all inquiries, and given orders for the things to be carried in from the sleighs, he sat down to a game of checkers with Bergström. The Majorskan, Arvid, and Ernst had gone out to look at the articles which were not intended to meet Jenny's view until Christmas eve. The Baron and the young girl sat alone on one of the smallest sofas.

"Did you come from Delby, Baron?" inquired Jenny, with something more stiff in her manner than was generally the case.

The Baron leaned his head on his hand, and fixed his eyes on Jenny with a searching look, which lacked the former friendly *and satisfied* expression.

"Why do you ask that?"

"Because you have lately been there oftener than at Rönby?"

"Why not?"

"Baroness A—— is a lovely woman."

"Yes, so it is said. But you cannot believe me to be attached to her?"

"Why should I not believe it?"

Jenny bent deeper over her work.

"Jenny!" The Baron leaned forward. His voice betrayed warm and strong feeling. "Is it possible that *you* can for a moment consider me so fickle, so quick to forget and again love? Look at me and say, is it really possible?"

Jenny did not look up, her hand trembled, and she said in a somewhat unsteady voice, —

"The fact is that Baron Fritz has ceased to visit Rönby."

"And *the reasons*, — those you have not guessed, but must seek the explanation of my conduct in a courtship."

There was something in his tone which sounded strange to Jenny's ears.

"A little while ago I perceived *one* of the reasons."

"Alfhilda's father?" whispered the Baron. "But, Jenny, there is one more, perhaps still mightier."

"And this is?"

"Need I tell you? O Jenny, how different things are now from what they used to be! It is only I who am the same.

"Are you really the same?" said Jenny, almost in a whisper.

"No, not even I am what I was a year ago. How many bitter hours, how many pangs would you not have spared me, if you had told me *all* that your heart felt!"

"I did."

Jenny's cheeks were crimson.

"No, Jenny, no!" said the Baron, as he leaned nearer and spoke in a peculiar vibrating voice. "Why not have told me that you were attached to Doctor Bergström? O, you would then at once have deprived me of all hope!"

Jenny looked up quickly. Her frank and open manner returned, and she fastened her eyes on the Baron as if she wished to let him read her soul.

"If I had been attached to any one, I should have told you. You, Baron Fritz, who have known me from childhood, ought to have realized this. It is true that I at one time felt an interest in the Doctor, but it was a passing fancy, which disappeared as hastily as it came."

"Thanks, Jenny!"

Before she was aware of it, the Baron had pressed his lips to her hand.

"What has given you occasion to believe me attached to the Doctor?" asked Jenny.

"Stormjhelm asserted it. And afterwards it seemed to me that there was something more than gratitude in your manner towards him during the Majorskan's illness. I fancied that you were too hearty."

"Could I be too much so towards one who had saved my mother's life and health?"

"Forgive me! I was a fool," whispered the Baron.

A moment's pause ensued.

"Well," resumed the Baron, in a changed tone, "what have you thought of my supposed fancy for Baroness A——?"

"That it was a pity that our idyl should go up in smoke through your marriage," replied Jenny, merrily. "I already saw myself sitting all alone as the superintendent of the school, without the consolation of an aged friend to come to see me and invite me out to ride."

"You lost the taste for the unmarried state; is it not so?" said the Baron, again leaning forward.

"Not at all, I only thought—"

Jenny smiled mischievously.

"What?"

"That you were perfectly infatuated to marry in such a hurry, when we might have had it so pleasant; that you, like me, could just as well have remained unmarried."

"So you made yourself believe in good earnest that I was going to marry the Baroness?"

"I feared it."

"No, Jenny," said the Baron, as he seized her hand and looked deep into her eyes. "*You* knew that Fritz would never be able to love any one but you. Do not look away," continued he, with that peculiar charm in his voice which a deep passion lends. "Jenny, you have read in my glance, in my whole demeanor, that I love you, that only in your love can I find my felicity. Look at me, tell Fritz that a faint echo of his feeling is to be found in your heart."

The door now opened; the Majorskan entered, and Jenny's only answer was,—

"The echo is not faint."

The next instant Jenny was in the kitchen, red and blooming as a rose, and very, very absent-minded, for the cook screamed out, frightened,—

"Mercy on us! it will not do for the Fröken to put cinnamon on the fish."

Jenny laughed, and looked confused.

After supper the Baron said to the Major,—

"The family cannot get rid of me this evening. I have a decided reluctance to return to Stjernebro."

He looked at Jenny, who blushed, to the great delight of Arvid, who noticed the fresh color in his sister's cheeks.

"And I think," replied the Major, laughing, "that it really does the Baron good now and then to fare badly at Rönby."

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The next morning, when Jenny came into the saloon, she found the Baron there.

"I have stayed here half an hour, waiting," said he, smiling as he went to meet her.

"For whom?" Jenny gave him her hand.

"For my intended mate."

"From Delby?"

Jenny avoided looking at him.

"No, she is called Jenny." The Baron seized both her hands, adding with emphasis, "'When our feeling passes over to love, we will resume this subject'; so you said last year when I offered you my affection and my hand. Now I offer my whole heart; I love you with all my soul, and therefore I ask, Will you become mine?"

"Yes, with heart and soul," whispered Jenny.

The Baron clasped her to his breast, and touched the young girl's fresh lips with a light kiss.

The next instant Arvid came rushing into the saloon, and Jenny fled to her mother.

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"Mamma!" exclaimed Jenny, as she threw herself on her neck, "it is now all over with your Jenny."

"How so?" asked the Majorskan, smiling; "you do not look as if you were ready to die."

"No, but to marry."

"Fritz?"

"Yes, certainly; he has now said, 'I love you,' and —"

"You have said the same to him; is it not true?"

"Mamma, I love him with my whole heart, and now you must bless us. You know — do you not? — that love only has led me."

"Yes, my Jenny, I know it. God be with you!"

When the first emotion subsided, the Majorskan said, with her mild smile, —

"It is best for me to tell papa of this, for otherwise he might become displeased."

"*But first you must lay my hand in Fritz's, and look upon us as only you can look. Ah, mamma, not until then shall I know that it is allowed me to love him.*"

Arvid had not remained long in the saloon, so that the Baron was alone when the Majorskan and Jenny entered. When he saw them, he went towards the Majorskan with a reverential expression.

"My happiness will not be complete until I can dare to hope that the tenderest of mothers will confide her daughter to my care."

"Those whom love unites God blesses! Be good to her, and may she become as rich a source of joy and happiness to you as she has been to me."

The Majorskan laid Jenny's hand in the Baron's.

Half an hour later they breakfasted in the best of spirits. All looked happy.

After breakfast the Majorskan took her husband's arm, and said, smiling, —

"I have something to tell you, my dear. Christmas is the time of confidential communications."

"Precious communications!" replied the Major, laughing. "Never marry, Baron; for then you expose yourself to communications like these, which begin with 'May I have money, — and money, and nothing but money.'"

"The advice comes too late," said the Baron. "The sight of your domestic happiness has excited my desire to enjoy the same thing."

"I congratulate you!"

When the Majorskan and the Major found themselves alone in the latter's room, he asked, —

"Well, Malin, what is it now? You look quite anxious, just as in days of old, when you stood and pleaded for one of the boys, whom I had promised a sound thrashing, and whom you wished to save from the wholesome chastisement. Then you always used to say: "Dear Gustaf, if you must punish the children, it ought never to be for such trifles; you thus inspire fear, and fear kills love. No; let

them never learn to be afraid of you, but rather accustom them in the first place to love their father! You then put your arm around my neck, and looked at me so beseechingly that — "

"That you preferred to be a loved instead of a feared father."

"Yes, that is it, and I have never repented it. Do you know, Malin, when I think of the matter, it is you after all who have made me a trifle better than that harpy Sophie. Had I not obtained such a kind, tender, and loving wife, all the evil powers would have gained the ascendency in my character. But as it is, you have evoked the good which lay slumbering at the bottom. Therefore, my dear little woman, speak to me without fear; for I see clearly that you have something on your mind."

"You have guessed right; I have indeed something on my mind. Jenny has made her choice of a husband."

"It can't be the Baron!" exclaimed the Major, impetuously.

"Yes, just he."

"That must not be. I have told Jenny a thousand times that she must not choose a nobleman, and especially one of high rank. People would say that I had sold my daughter to that rich young spark. No, Malin, Jenny may marry Peasant Anders if she wishes, but I will not consent to that patrician alliance. What would people think of me, a liberal, who married his only daughter to a regular aristocrat. My reputation at the Diet would be at an end, and I should be regarded as a renegade. I will not have it!"

"Gustaf, you are now under the influence of the first disagreeable impression; but when you reflect upon it, you will see that you have no right to hinder your daughter's happiness on such grounds, and refuse your consent to the choice her heart has made. No, my dear, the authority of parents ought in *this respect to limit* itself solely to the inquiry whether the man who requests their daughter's hand can make her happy; and they ought to beware of all constraint, all forcing of her feelings. Providence has never given one person the right to encroach upon another's freedom."

"Malin!" exclaimed the Major, impatiently.

The Majorskan laid her hand on his shoulder, leaned forward, and asked, —

"Would my father's motives have been approved, if he had refused you my hand because you were a nobleman? Would you not have considered him a despot, if he, on account of his political reputation, or something of the kind, had put a bar to his daughter's happiness? Will you now deny your Jenny the felicity she so well deserves, only because her happiness would cost you the sacrifice of a prejudice? Impossible. You cannot mean to change her joy to tears."

"But you will change me to a poor coward; and to avoid that, I must leave the field."

"Not before you have promised to bless our daughter's choice. Or do you really think that Jenny can get a better husband than Fritz? Ah, Gustaf, do not turn away; do not allow your pride to gain the victory over your heart, but do what is right in the first place, and be a good father, who only desires his children's welfare. Does not your Malin deserve to see her daughter happy? Do from love for us what you would not do for yourself."

"Malin, the deuce take it, if you do not do with me just as you choose! Well, in God's name, then, rather than see you and Jenny sorrowful, I should be ready to blow up the whole Riddarhus,* and it would be no great shame, with its ragged banners and decayed ancestry." The Major drew his wife down on his knee, adding, —

* Equivalent to the House of Lords.

"But take good care that you and the girl do not allow yourselves to be led by vanity."

"I!"

"Well, well, not just you; but she."

"No, Gustaf, Jenny only follows her heart, and I would be the first one to oppose this union, if I had not watched the rise and development of her love for Fritz. Never would I allow my daughter to marry from any other motive than love; for how shall woman find strength and support among life's vicissitudes, and the thorns which are always to be found in the matrimonial path, if not in her love? It is her strength, her comfort, and her whole life. Through it she becomes patient, mild, and forbearing; without it she either becomes a passive slave to her husband's whims, or a torment to herself and the man she is bound to."

"With that for a commander, you have fought your way through life, in spite of my choleric nature. Through it you have often moderated and subdued this same stubborn disposition." The Major kissed his wife, adding, "Yes, love is the only weapon woman ought to employ in order to conquer man."

In a few moments Jenny rested on her father's heart, and he pressed the Baron's hand: —

"I now give my darling away with the full confidence that in her husband's love she will find a rich recompense for the joy she has shed in the paternal home. So good a daughter must become a tender and loving wife. The wife's love and virtues form the foundation of home happiness. God bless you, my children!"

---

Soon after the door opened to Bergström's room, and the Baron entered. The old gardener was engaged in training some large vines which stood in a pair of *green* boxes. The nobleman stopped at the door as if in the presence of a superior.

"Step forward, Herr Baron," said the old man; "can I be of any service to you?"

The Baron advanced to him. Bergström stood erect, with a pruning-knife in one hand and the other resting on the trellis. His form appeared powerful, and as he stood there he presented a fine model of a *man* who, in spite of his years, still preserved the vigor of both body and mind. There was a mild earnestness in the look he fixed upon the slender and pale young man who stood before him. The Baron's eyes had an almost humble expression.

"It seems to me as though Alfhilda's father were the proper judge of my life," began the Baron, "as though I did not possess the right to enjoy any happiness before he had said to me, 'I forgive you. You have expiated your fault, be happy!' Therefore I stand here now and ask, Can you with your whole heart forgive the man for the sins of his youth? Can you see me happy without being angry with one who has occasioned you so much sorrow?"

"I can indeed, Baron." The old man gave him his hand. "Have I not said, 'He who forgives shall be worthy of forgiveness,' and I forgive you with my whole heart. I did so during the outburst of my first grief; how much rather now! You have a noble heart. You have felt crushed and full of repentance; what more can I demand? My hate, — would that be able to undo the past? No! It would only imbitter my sorrow, and make me incapable of deriving consolation from the Scriptures, while, on the contrary, I now know that I act, think, and feel as it befits a Christian. God protect you, and make you happy; that is what Alfhilda's father has to say to you; and from my emotions I know that she looks down upon us with joy. When you yourself become a father, teach your sons

not to sacrifice a whole family for a momentary passion. And now, peace and forgetfulness!"

The Baron pressed the rough hand of Alfhilda's father to his lips, touched by the mild and conciliatory spirit which filled the simple workingman's words. This motion was an expression of true reverence for the old man, who preferred to be a forgiving Christian rather than an offended and implacable father.

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In the beginning of May Doctor Bergström celebrated his wedding with Fröken Albertine von Krug. All from Rönby were invited to it; Jenny was bridesmaid.

The Professorskan had found it good to forget her anger towards her brother, now that her niece was to become Baroness Silfverkrona, although this news cost her a sleepless night, as she recollected that her own daughter would only become Fru Bergström.

The two brothers Qvickfelt were groomsmen, and Albert, the bride's brother, acted in her father's stead.

It is true the veins swelled on her Grace's brow when the elder Bergström led the bridegroom forward; but the proud and overbearing dame, who had been conquered by her son-in-law, had determined to pass before the world as one who in all respects acted according to her own will. She had therefore refused to hear of any private wedding, but insisted upon all the pomp and display which she so loved. She would thus have the satisfaction of showing that she, who might have had a Count for her son-in-law, nevertheless preferred the distinguished physician. In that way all would believe that it was she who had decided her daughter's choice, and not, as would otherwise have been the case, that she had only yielded to the will of her departed husband. Yes, it was even necessary for the Professorskan to condescend to be gracious towards the gardener himself, in order thereby to tell all these friends, who kept such close watch upon her, that she considered her worth so great that she elevated all who became related to her.

Warm and fervent was the blessing the elder Bergström pronounced over the wedded pair, and in his tearful eyes one could read the old man's gratitude to God, who had allowed him to witness his son's happiness.

After the ceremony, the Count approached Albertine and said with emotion, —

"You have been magnanimous in your revenge, and through your influence upon Minna you have allowed me to taste of domestic happiness."

"My merit is slight, for your happiness is in your own hands, and it consists in teaching Minna to love you."

When Bergström, after the wedding, found himself alone in his room in the home of the newly married pair, he whispered with clasped hands, —

"Father in Heaven, now I am ready to be united with my daughter. I thank thee thou hast allowed me to see my son's happiness with joy and pride. Now I have lived long enough."

But still he lived many years, and had the joy of rocking his grandchildren on his knee, and of being surrounded by love in his old age. He resided with Albertine and Richard, and ended his days in the care of his children.

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The day after Albertine's wedding, the door opened to Hagar's room, where she rested on her sick-couch, pale and undisturbed. Albert entered with a gloomy and hopeless look.

"I have fulfilled my duty to my sister and led her to love and happiness," said he, seizing the little emaciated hand;

"now I return to my bride, my only joy on earth." He kissed her hand. "Hagar, what will become of me when you are gone? How shall I be able to drag out my life? With you, my heart will die, it will become incapable of enjoying or suffering, and yet what has my love been to me but suffering, renunciation, and despair?" He seated himself by her side.

"Always the same dreary hopelessness, Albert," said Hagar, in her mild, clear tones. "Will you never bear your fate with submission? Life, my friend, is a transition period. Neither its sorrows nor its joys ought so to bind our souls that we forget to fix our thoughts upon the great aim of our existence." She laid her other hand on his. "When I am gone, Albert, think of the poor Jewess as of a friend, a sister, and seek a mate at whose side you can pass your days, with whom you can speak about me. Ah, you know that your happiness will give my spirit peace and joy even beyond the grave! You were my whole world upon this earth, but you could not become my mate; between us rose a different religious belief, which commanded us to live apart. But you were my strength during the days of pain, my pride and my happiness during those of health, and you will be the last object to which my broken heart clings in the last struggle. Will you not have courage to bear the decree of destiny, when the hope that you may once more become happy will make death sweet to Hagar?"

"Hagar," said Albert, leaning his pale brow against her hand, "you know not the man, the heart that loves you. You with your soul at once glowing and tender cannot comprehend a disposition such as mine. Cold and unimpressible by nature, all that was soft and tender within me hardened under my mother's influence. My soul assumed a stamp of iron inflexibility. Goodness, tenderness, mildness, I knew not. Compassion was strange to me. I was just; that is all. Well then, child, when such a disposition as mine is heated by love, and the iron becomes fire, it occurs but *once* in life. When you are gone, when death has robbed me of the only being I love, then the liquid stream of fire will cool and harden. I shall live, because I am not cowardly enough to commit suicide, but I shall neither seek nor find any consolation, any recompense. The power to enjoy, suffer, and despair will be buried with you, and you will leave behind you the stern, inexorable judge, who understands only the word *right*, and who has buried all other feelings. Speak not to me of any other woman making me happy. I shall never love, never seek happiness. Speak not to me of fate, of submission to its decrees; I cannot be submissive, I cannot bend to necessity. I can only let its blows crush my soul. Such am I, such has my mother made me; for no accent of tenderness ever sounded in the child's ear, to find an echo in its heart. You might have made me another being, — but it was not to be. Well, then, this merciless mocking fate may crush me, but I will not bend before it. Therefore, do not try to console me. For me there is no consolation. Let me sit here at your side, and drop by drop empty the bitter cup. When it is drained, I shall return to reality, to life, and attend to my calling, without feeling, without thought, without interest."

"My Albert, — for in heaven you will be mine, — your grief paints your own soul to you so imbittered, so crushed; but when you stand at Hagar's grave, it will seem to you that you see her eyes fastened beseechingly upon you, and these eyes will speak of all the love she has cherished. My spirit will whisper, 'Love those whom I loved'; and then you will look around you in life's desert, you will search out the unhappy, and minister to the suffering. From Hagar's

grave you will go to your mother's home, and with filial love endeavor to approach her; and when you do so, think that Hagar's spirit is hovering over you."

Hagar spoke in that wonderful half-dreamy tone which was peculiar to her; pale, silent, and with a world of love in his look, Albert listened. The hours went by; she slumbered with her head resting against his shoulder. He sat so without moving, but when her breathing grew fainter and fainter, he bent down. The Jewish girl was dead, and the strong man fell senseless to the floor.

A few days afterwards, a pale shadow wandered to the Jewish churchyard, and there knelt on Hagar's grave.

It was Albert.

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At midsummer Baron Silfverkrona carried his bride to Stjernebro. The summer sun, flowers, joy, love, and blessing, — these are what distinguished Jenny's wedding.

Such as was her entrance into the married state, such was her life. Did it remain as bright and peaceful? We hope so, for Jenny continued the same good and simple Jenny that she had always been, and was in her turn a loving wife and tender mother.

The year after Jenny's marriage Ernst Qvickfelt united his fate with Fröken Stormhjelm, the Count's sister.

The Majorskan, who had never worked for anything but her children's happiness, had also the satisfaction of seeing her efforts richly rewarded. She enjoyed the felicity in her old age of being surrounded by her happy and loving children and grandchildren.

The Professorskan, on the contrary, incapable of entering into her daughter's happiness, and in her heart deeply lamenting that all her vain dreams had gone up in smoke, lived and died alone. She ended her joyless life without any satisfaction.

Albert advanced on the path of honor solitary, gloomy, and reserved, lacking the power to enjoy the success he achieved, and without rejoicing at his existence.

And now farewell, my dear reader. Forgive me if my sketch has been defective, and has not corresponded to my desire faithfully and truly to describe these *Family Mothers*, whose example I hoped would lead some other mothers to think of their duties.

*By goodness we evoke goodness.* The virtues and faults which distinguish the mother are reflected in the child's soul, and there assume a definite form.

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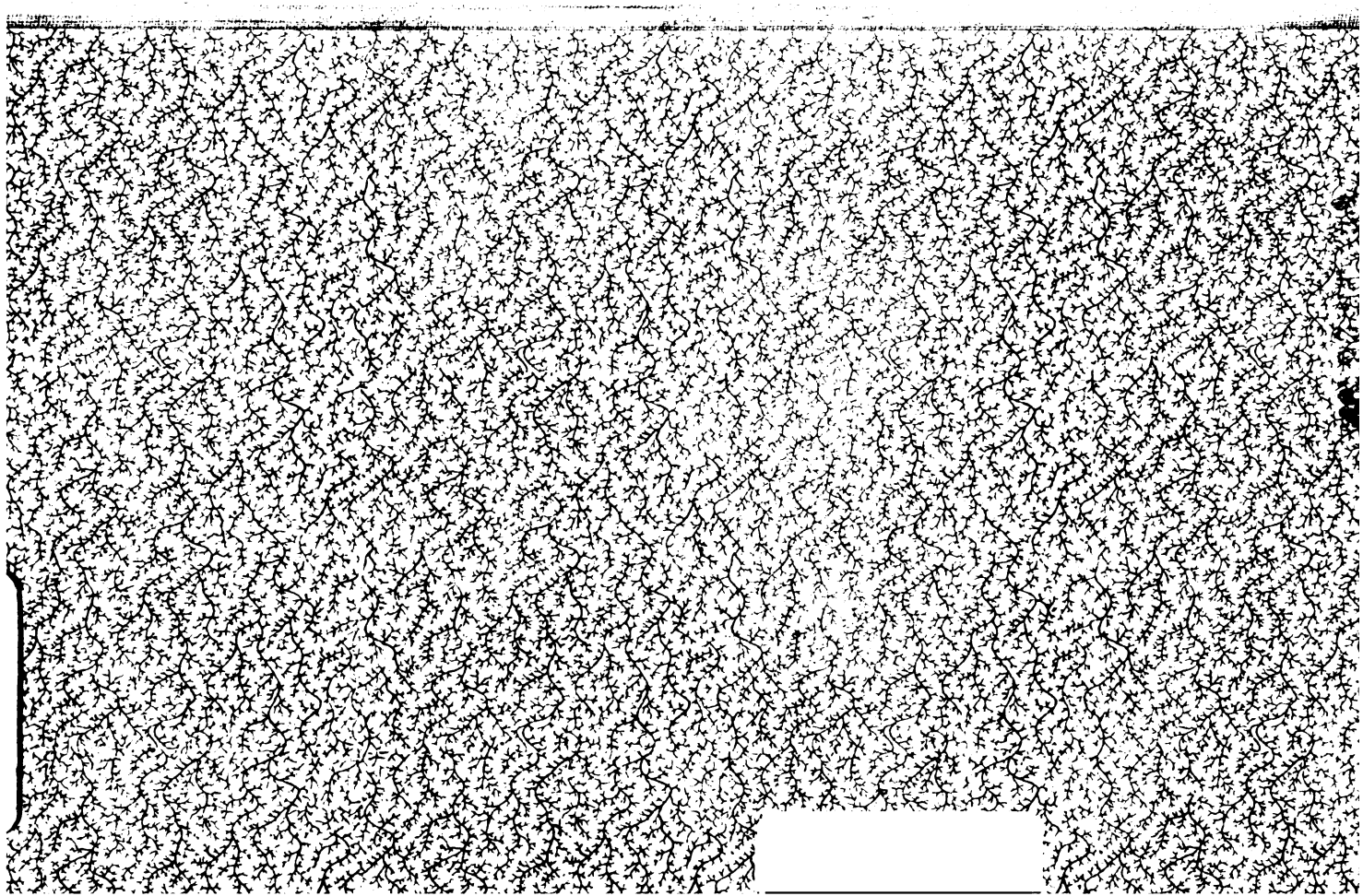

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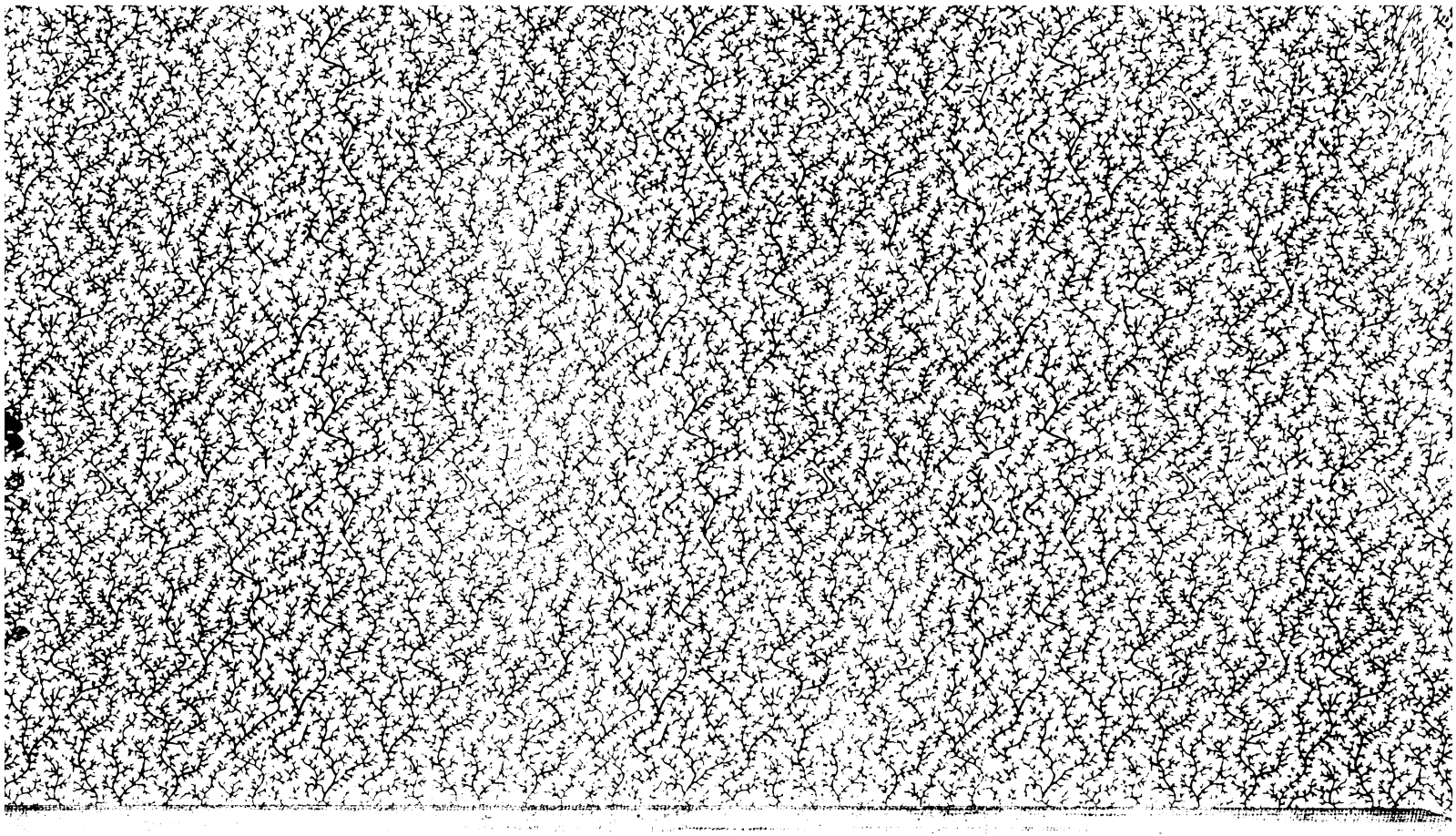
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